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ICELAND

ROUTES OVER THE HIGHLANDS



SPRENGISANDUR AND KJALVEGUR

BY

DANIEL BRUUN



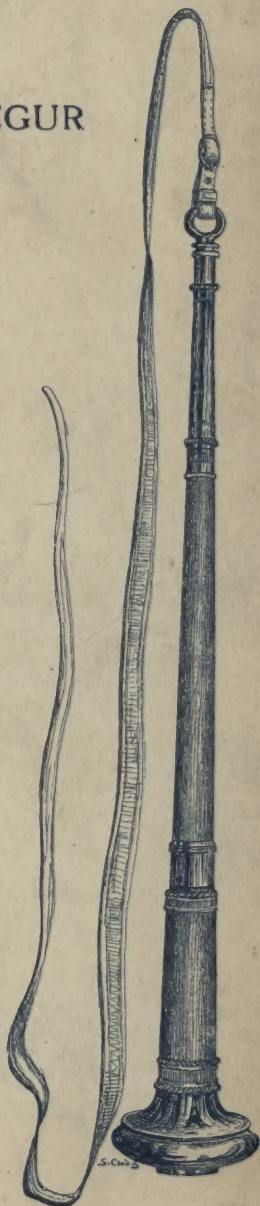
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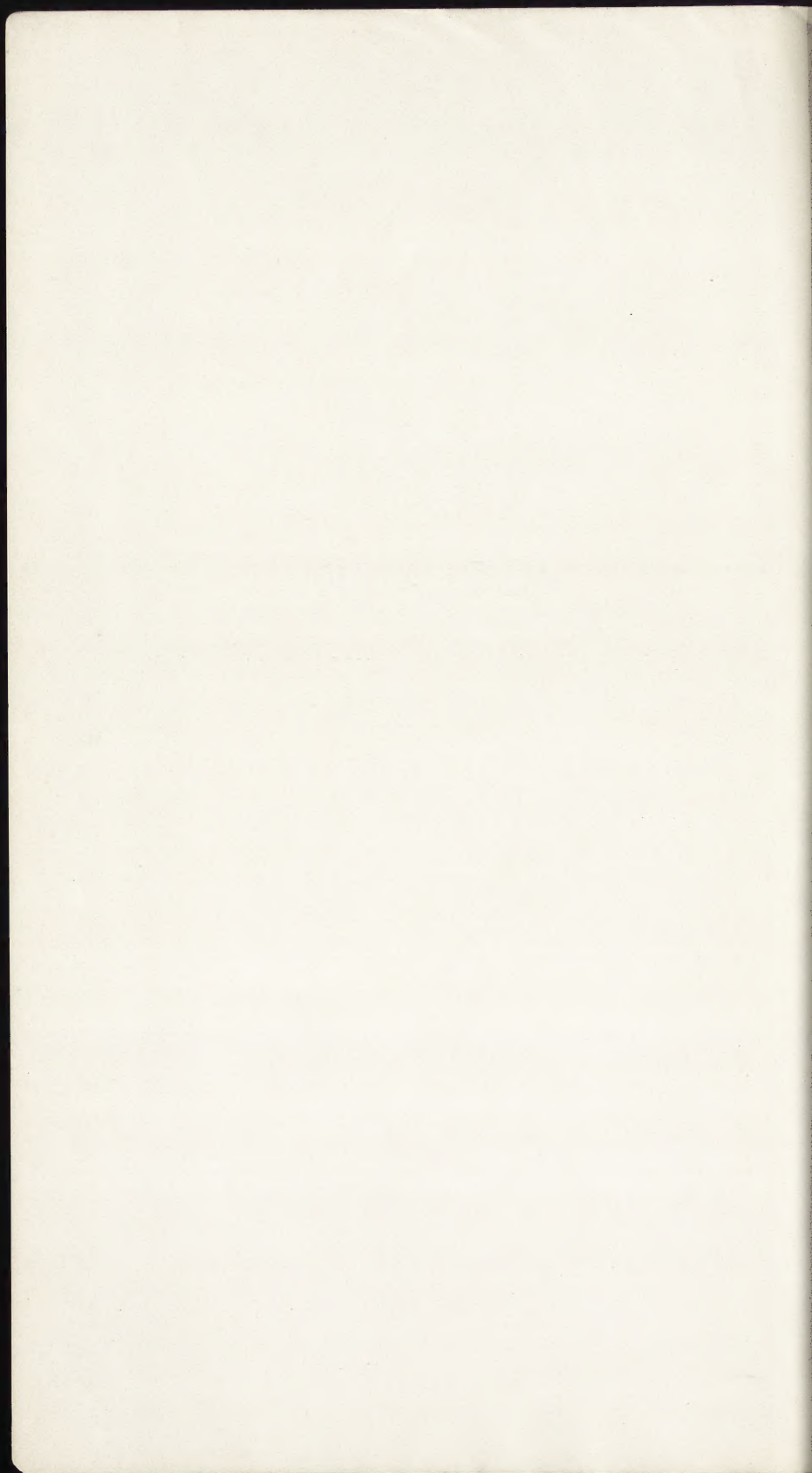
COPENHAGEN AND REYKJAVÍK
GYLDENDALSKE BOGHANDEL
NORDISK FORLAG

1907



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DANIEL BRUUN

WITH MAPS AND PLANS, AND A RESUMÉ IN THE
ICELANDIC LANGUAGE



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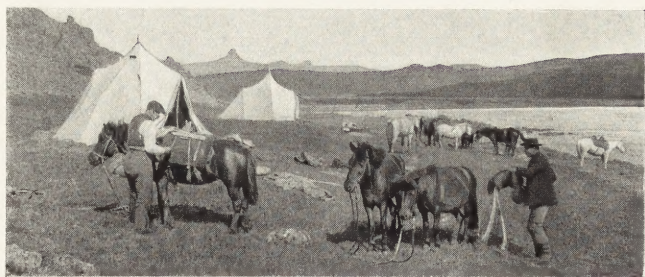
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Preparing to leave camp.

THE BRIDLE PATHS.

THROUGH THE HIGHLANDS OF THE INTERIOR OF
ICELAND.



INTRODUCTION:

ON my instigation the late *Páll Briem*, Deputy Governor of the N. and E. districts, advocated the plan of finding, and marking off the old mountain paths through the interior of Iceland. In 1897 I had crossed both the *Kjalvegur* and the *Sprengisandur*. At the expense of the Icelandic Treasury I then a second time crossed (in 1898) the interior of the highland and indicated the *Kjalvegur* which was subsequently marked off with cairns. In 1902, also at the expense of the Treasury, I undertook to trace and mark the difficult parts of the *Sprengisandur* between the Jökulls. Finally in 1905 through the influence of the Minister, Mr. *H. Hafstein*, the Treasury supplied the amount for the investigation of the path through the *Kaldidalur*, from the Geysir and Thingvellir to the north.

Besides these main bridle paths, I have explored several other passes in the mountains in the interior of Iceland, which however will not be mentioned here. Meanwhile only a description of the paths leading over the *Sprengisandur* and the *Kjölur* will be given here. It will be published by public aid, as in 1905, a certain sum of money was granted to the author, by the „*Althing*“ (parliament) from its budget. Since the paths across the wastes have been traced, and marked off, no difficulty will be found in crossing either the *Kjalvegur* or the *Sprengisandur*.

Hellerup January 1907.

Daniel Bruun.

THE INTERIOR OF ICELAND.

VERY few foreigners have any idea of the great extent of *Iceland*. One would not suppose that the size of this island in the North Atlantic is 104,785 square Kilom. in other words about three times the size of Denmark and larger than the habitable coasts of Greenland. The island is one great highland, varying from 500—1000 meters in height upon which there are small plateaus. The extent of the Lowlands is only one fifteenth of that of the Highlands, so they are comparatively small, but of the greatest economical value, as there are hardly any other inhabited places to be found.



Örfajökull.

The highest mountains in the interior lie in a line from N. W. to S. E. These are however no connected range, but a row of ice and snow capped cupola shaped summits, which are separated by dips. These cupola shaped summits, rise (as the Geologist *Thoroddsen* has proved) from the main plateau to the height of 1400—2000 meters and lie 600—900 met. above the interior highland. The most easterly of these summits is the great *Vatnajökull* with *Örfajökull*, its mass of ice covering an area of 8,500 square Kilom. The *Vatnajökull* is separated from the *Tungnafellsjökull* by *Vonarskard* 1000 m. high. Between the *Tungnafellsjökull*, and the *Hofsjökull* lies the broad dip, *Sprengisandur* 650 m. To the west of the *Hofsjökull* and between that and the *Langjökull*, lies *Kjölur* or *Kjalvegur* 600 m. Between the *Langjökull* and the

Eiríksjökull, *Flosaskard* 800 m., and between the *Langjökull* and the *Ok*, *Kaldidalur* 700 m. The table-land N. of the last mentioned snow mountains, some of which abound in lakes and bogs, have different names, such as, the *Stórisandur*, *Grimstungnaheidi*, *Arnarvatnsheidi*, *Tvíðægja* and *Holtavörðuheidi*.

In the highland there are many valleys through which the ramifications of the mountains extend towards the sea.

The highland of the interior consists chiefly of wastes,



No grass!

where no grass grows, but the condition of their surface varies somewhat, according to the geographical nature of the fundamental mountains, where Basalt and Dolomite form the substratum, the surface is covered with irregular shaped rocks rent asunder by the frost. A ride in such regions is consequently most difficult. Where Tuff and Breccia are found, the surface consists chiefly of gravel and scoria, which through decomposition has loosened from the Breccia; riding here can be very hard work. The lava fields cover a very large area, being almost without vegetation and it would be difficult to find a more desolate sight. As far as the eye can reach, the surface is covered with a hard

jet-black mass; there is no sign of life, and the silence of nature is depressing. The largest tracts of lava in the interior are *Ödådahraun* N. of the Vatnajökull 3500 square Kilom., *Kjalhraun* on the Kjalvegur, and *Hallmundarhraun* between the Langjökull and the Eiríksjökull. Besides the cupola shaped Jökulls, there are to be found here and there on the highland, solitary high mountains, for instance N. of the Vatnajökull; the *Herdubreid* 1660 m. high; the *Snæfell* 1822 m. and the *Dyngjufjöll* 1400 m., a large volcanic group, with the crater valley *Askja*. S. W. of the Langjökull, the *Hlödufell* 1163 m., and the *Skjaldbreid* 1063 m.

Mountains and peaks appear here and there on the borders of the Jökulls (glaciers) and among these the volcano *Öræfajökull* 2119 m., Iceland's highest and most important mountain.

Iceland's glaciers surpass in size many of those of the European Continent.

Thoroddsen has described the 139 large and small glaciers found in Iceland. In Greenland the traveller may picture himself transplanted to the ice period, whilst in Iceland he may sooner imagine that he is in a post-glacial period in which the masses of ice have decreased. The area covered by the glaciers of Iceland is very extensive viz, 13,500 square Kilom. The following serves as a comparison: the Alpine glaciers are only 3000 square Kilom., the Norwegian glaciers are about the same size as those of the Alps, the Swedish, 400 square Kilom. and those of the Caucasus 160 square Kilom.

According to Thoroddsen, the large glaciers in the interior of Iceland lie on Tuff and Breccia.

As the land is chiefly composed of volcanic and basaltic mountains, dark shades of colour are the most predominant in the landscape, more especially where there is nothing but basalt.

In a country like Iceland, with a damp climate, and many large glaciers there are of course many rivers with large volumes of water. Some of the largest are, the *Hvítá* (called *Ölfusá* towards the end of its course) the *Thjórsá*, the *Jökulsá*, in the *Axarffjörður* etc. These are so mighty that they can compete with the Rhine at its middle. The glaciers in the interior serve as immense reservoirs from which most of the rivers are supplied, and as they constantly attract rain and moisture the supply is always regular.

The Icelanders make a distinction between „bergvatn“



Hvíá North of Gulfoss. — Bláfell (near Hvíárvan) in distance.

(vatn-water) clear water which does not come from the glaciers, and jökulvatn, milky water from the glaciers.

The ice and snow melt at the base of the glaciers and there form swamps and pools of water, which find an outlet in many streams and rivers. The watershed between them is often almost imperceptible. The streams form large rivers, the milky glacier water of which, rushes down in torrents towards the sea. Gravel, quick-sands, rocky wastes and fields of lava form the surface of the highland, which is of a peculiar beauty. For one who, like the Author, has frequently traversed these wastes on horseback, the attraction becomes greater and greater. No one, who has not ascended the highlands from the deep, perhaps foggy, dales, can form an idea of how beautiful it is at the top, where one suddenly discovers the glittering snow in the distance, where one must ride for days over rocky sands, or steal across the jet-black lava fields; where one must cross the treacherous glacier-rivers, and hasten on, to the few and scattered grass-plots, Iceland's oaces, in order to procure fodder for one's horse. During 2—2 $\frac{1}{2}$ months there is a little grass on these oaces, which at the height of 500 meters are for the most part very small, and often in connection with hot springs. They can supply a few horses with fodder for some days, should they be covered with grass. On leaving, all the grass is consumed, and no more horses can graze there that summer. Some oaces are often overgrown with moss, and only useful as pasturage for sheep, in which case the traveller must therefore have a supply of hay with him.

The Lowlands and valleys are, as already mentioned, the inhabited places, and only a few farms are found on the outer declivity of the highland. The few somewhat extensive and inhabited tracts which lie rather high, are the *Mývatns-veit* 300 m. above the level of the sea, the *Mödrudalsfjöll* 4—500 m. and the *Jökuldalsheidi* 500—530 m. The means of subsistence of the inhabitants of these elevated settlements (Bygdir) consist almost exclusively in the breeding of sheep, and perhaps a little fishing in the lakes. The *Mödrudalsfjöll* (fjöll-group of mountains) is chiefly covered with loose sand, and here the sheep get nothing but *Elymus arenarius* and *Salix glauca*, but they thrive very well on it.

In the Saga age, the interior of the country was more inhabited than at the present time. At a very early period

the Norwegian settlers tried to subsist right in the interior of the highland; but they soon discovered that the climate there was too severe. The cold was too great in winter; the immense quantity of snow prevented the cattle from finding food, and in the short summer, sufficient fodder could not be procured for the winter. The Mödrudal's average temperature for instance is: Minus $0,8^{\circ}$ C.

Several settlements in the high altitude soon disappeared after the Plague had ravaged Iceland from 1402 to 1404 and caused the ruin of many farms. Besides this, there were many volcanic eruptions, drifting sands, glacier torrents (*Jökulhlaup*) etc. etc. consequently many settlements in the highlands, and on the outskirts died out. They are known



Mývatn at Skutustadir.

by the ruins of farms and houses, which appear when the volcanic sand and ashes that cover them drift away. *Geitland*, which was situated to the W. of the Langjökull, was destroyed already in 1185. In the 14th Century the famous *Thjòrsárdalur*, „Iceland's Pompeii“, was destroyed by an eruption of the Hecla.

There were also farms in the district S. of the Hofsjökull, and in the vicinity of the beautiful glacier-lake *Hvítárvatn*, into which the Langjökull empties its glaciers. There were also settlements in the valleys N. of the Hofsjökull, down towards the Skagafjörður, as well as in several other places. Here the author has made interesting investigations, which throw light upon the state of civilisation in Iceland in olden days. As a rule, no one lived in the interior of the highland proper, where the climate was inhospitable and severe. But it sometimes happened that outlaws fled to the highland where they led a miserable life in summer, fishing trout,



Langjökull with Jarlhet



Hvítá



, seen from the East.



atn.

or stealing the peasant's sheep which grazed on the pastures. These fugitives were the original cause of the extraordinary popular opinion, that colonies of „*Útilegumenn*“ (outlaws) existed in the highlands, a credance, prevalent among the lower classes up to the present time.

When the wind blows over the highland in winter, it seems as if all life were extinct, only the *Aurora Borealis* gleams in the sky with rapid varying streams of light. In summer, the whistling notes of plovers and curlews are heard on the tableland. Swans, geese, and other web-footed birds breed in the lakes, and thousands of sheep and lambs, some young cattle and colts, make their way to the interior of the country in search of food.



Crossing a lava field.

It also happens, but only at long intervals, that horse caravans cross the country and the foot-prints of the animals remain long ineffaceable.

There is no sound of rolling carriages nor the baying of dogs in the distance, and no smoke rises from human dwellings. There is perfect peace. Only now and then the hoarse, warning and weird cry of a raven is heard across the plain, or in the valleys. To day, as it did a thousand years ago, the everlasting ice glitters on the beautiful mountains, seen on the horizon.

In spring-time, the people from the farms in the valleys bring the sheep and lambs to the foot of the highlands, and in small flocks the animals go further towards the interior, following the banks of the rivers, or the boggy mossgrown dips. These animals wander slowly towards the glaciers, and right into the valleys between them, a solitary sheep,

or small flocks often being met with in these regions. In the bright sunshine they appear as white patches on the dark sands, the mountain slopes and in the deep valleys; so that they are visible even at a great distance. To the unaccustomed eye, it is impossible to discern any food on the spots where the lambs understand to find it. Here and there, there are places (as a rule, boggy tracts) near the rivers, which, seen from a distance, appear to be splendid meadows, but which, on nearer approach prove to be covered with hardly anything else but moss. The sheep graze on the highlands till



On the Summer pasture.

September, when trained men look them up, and drive them home.

The interior of Iceland, quite up to the glaciers, is divided into *joint-pastures* (*afsjettir*), bearing the name of the districts to which they belong. The lambs often find their way from the one pasture to the other, therefore the ears of the sheep from the different farms are marked, and in this way it can be seen to which farm they belong. On certain days the peasants meet in order to exchange such sheep as they may have got hold of by mistake.

The peasants must, as a rule, go up to the mountains two or three times to drive home the sheep. From the end of September, when the snow-storms begin and the snow lies high, it is impossible to go about in the interior.



Assembling to collect the sheep from summer pasture.

These trips to the mountains are systematically arranged, and the search is carried on, on certain lines. They make first for the most remote parts, whence the sheep and lambs are driven down along the streams and rivers to the inhabited districts. On these excursions the people must pass through, and even spend a night, in places where no grass



Down from the highlands. — The sheep herd is brought into a big fold

is to be found for the horses, and consequently they must have a supply of hay with them.

This means many a brisk and fatiguing ride for the young men, but it is always looked upon as a pleasure. In the evening, after these excursions, the peasants assemble in their small portable tents, or in one of the miserable huts to be

found in the highlands; there they sit huddled up in order to protect themselves against the cold, and while the kettle boils, they sing, drink coffee (they have no brandy with them) and seem to enjoy life in the mountains. After a few hours sleep, they mount their horses again.

Every evening they drive the sheep they have collected a good distance on the way towards the „Bygd“ (settlement). The next day they continue their ride until they have collected thousands of sheep. With a deafening noise, they are driven into big folds, where they are sorted out and sent on to the farms to which they belong. This lasts several days and is a national festival, at which lots of people are present, both men, women and children.

For those wishing to travel through the interior, the greatest obstacle, is the want of pasturage for the horses; there is another great difficulty, viz: the dangerous crossing of the glacier-rivers, where one may perish in the quick-sands. The fog too, is a dangerous enemy. One must advance to obtain grass for the horses. If you lose your way, you are placed in a great dilemma.

Down to the present time, roads in Iceland, even in the inhabited parts, meant, as a rule, only certain directions in which one could ride; they were indicated by paths, sometimes deep, and which often disappeared in stony ground. There were very few bridges, one proceeded as well as one could, through bogs, rocky regions, or sandy rivers. In later years the means of communication have been greatly improved in the inhabited parts of the country, and something has also been done for the interior. There were passes here, between the glaciers from olden days, and they connected the N. and S. of the country.

It did not last long before the adventurous Northmen found some difficult bridle paths, leading across the interior, and in olden times they were much used. In later times however, many accidents happened to the commercial caravans which passed this way, and at last the bridle paths were abandoned, so we knew very little about them hitherto:

The main bridle paths in question are:

I. TO THE W. OF THE LANGJÖKULL

which lead through the *Kaldidalur* (between the Langjökull and the Ok) to the *Kalmanstunga* farm, and from there across the celebrated *Surtshellir* to the N.

II. THE KJÖLUR OR KJALVEGUR,

between the *Hofsjökull* and the *Langjökull*, connects Arnes Sysla (sysla-canton) in the S. with Húnavatns and the Skagafjardar Sysla in the N. From the S. the road follows the river *Hvítá* as far as the *Hvítárvatn*, passing close up to the *Kerlingarfjöll* with hundreds of hot springs, vapours of which rise up through the snow, and continues in a N. direction between the above named glaciers, across lava fields, on the outskirts of which the hot springs near *Hveravellir* are found, then over the *Blanda*, to the N.

III. OVER THE SPRINGISANDUR

which formerly was so much dreaded, is an enormous plain covered with gravel and sand, and with undulating hillocks between the *Vatnajökull* and the *Hofsjökull*. Every summer after the ice and snow have melted, the sand becomes soft, and the horses sink down into it. On the sand itself there is no grass. The great river *Skjálfandi* flows towards the N. and the *Thjórsá* from the sands, flows towards the S.

Besides these main bridle paths, there are, from olden times, several other paths, some of which branch off from the main paths, and sometimes connect other districts. Among others the *Vatnajökulsvegur* must be mentioned, which runs along the N. border of the *Vatnajökull*, and is probably of no use at the present time. Some old bridle paths lead through the lava fields of *Ódádahraun* N. of the *Vatnajökull*. The mass of lava here, is said to be so enormous, that it could cover the whole of Denmark, with a layer fifteen feet deep. In the centre of the lava fields is the well known volcano *Askja*, its crater is 13 miles broad, and there have been eruptions from it in our time. The *Vatnahjallavegur* which branches off from the *Kjalvegur*, and runs along the N. border of the *Hofsjökull* to the *Eyja fjörður* etc. etc.



ACROSS THE „KJÖLUR“ FROM SAUDÁRKRÓKR TO REYKJAVÍK.

FOR the Tourist, who will not be satisfied by making one of the traditional, I am almost tempted to say, too commonplace Tours, which all strangers are induced to — for the Tourist, who is a real out-door man, and does not mind spending a few days in uninhabited regions, I would recommend a ride through the deserted inner Highlands from North to South, or vice versa.

Take the route over *Kjölur*! All that is characteristic in



Drangey.

Icelandic scenery will then spread itself out before us: Through a broad smiling thickly-populated valley — *Skagafjörður* — where nature exhibits itself in all its richness and abundance, our road winds up over the hill of the coast districts to the mightly, desolate, and yet so splendid Highland plain bordered by the white domes of the glaciers' perpetual ice. Here our way passes over desert sands, across rapid rivers, and lava fields black as a ravens wing to a mighty crater, and to mountain tarns rich in feathered life! Then on again down towards the inhabited plains of the South — to *Gullfoss*, *Geysir*, *Thingvellir* and *Reykjavik*.

The ship heads up the 20 mile long and comparatively broad Skagafford. But already before we have fast ground under our feet, before we have trodden this traditional soil with its memories of a thousand years, the shape of the little Island *Drangey* appears in sight and reminds us vividly of the past.

The rock island raises itself a hundred fathoms sheer out of the blue water, not unlike a square fort. Nature has here on this detached part of Iceland formed a place of defence, where the Saga hero, *Grettir the Strong*, spent the last three years of his life as an outlaw. It was from here, that Grettir, once when his fire had gone out, swam ashore — nearly five miles — to fetch more; an unrivalled performance. When he had spent three years on the island, which is only 200 fathoms long and 50 wide, he was at last surprised and killed; he had then only one year more to pass before he would have been a free man again; but his foes grudged him the freedom he had sighed for for twenty slowly passing years. Grettir the Strong is one of the great heroes of Icelandic Saga, and was a real hero. Countless are the stories of his courage, cunning, and strength, and mementos of his illustrious career are frequently to be found in the north. At the top of the island the site of his abode may still be seen. Drangey is now uninhabited, but for six weeks during the spring, bird-catching goes on briskly here; specimens of the auk species, (the Guillemot, Auk, & Puffin) forming the principle booty. The birds are caught in a peculiar manner by means of large rafts on which the snares are spread, live specimens being used as decoys. Now as in olden days sheep are grazed on the island both summer and winter.

We come into Skagafford, past Drangey and the other splendid islands, which adorn this Fjord, whilst the hills rise on the right and left, their summits, may be, capped with snow.

Straight before us, to the South, we see the white houses of the trading station *Sauðárkrókr*, lying on the strand beneath the hills at the end of the Fjord. — Still further south we see the broad Skagaffords valley, where the sun sparkles and the refraction gives small islets, eminences, and farms an exaggerated height. In the far south, at the end of the valley — lies a blue conical mountain, the top of which is quite white. This is *Mælifellshnjúkur* which stretches skyward over all the neighbouring hills, and can be seen from far around, even from right in the middle of the country, whither we are bound. The Parsonage farm *Mælifell* lies at the foot of the mountain, while the farm *Gilhagi* lies a little farther south in the dale.

The ship casts anchor in the bay opposite the town, a boat comes out, and we are landed at one of the small piers belonging to the traders. We are at once surprised at the

many small elegant wooden houses, which are all painted in light and pleasant colours. There are several streets, a little Hotel, where one can spend the night, a church, and several rather large tradesmens shops where stock of provisions may be obtained; and further a group of other houses belonging to artizans, fishermen and others. The place is further honoured by a clergyman, and an official acting as judge and revenue officer of the district.

The arrival of the steamer 'is generally marked by the presence of a number of peasants in the town. Especially



On horseback.

after the wool-shearing in the early summer, they come to the trading station with their caravans. The horses are fastened one behind the other with the wool bales hanging from either side of the pack-saddles. Towards evening one caravan after the other starts out, the people kissing one another good bye once, twice, thrice, or even oftener, indifferent whether on horseback or on foot; and the men start off at a wild pace, which is kept up for a short distance,—in fact they perform a kind of „Fantasia“ like the Arabs on similar occasions.

The evening is far advanced before the last caravan has departed, but in the shops the lights still burn for some time longer, while the accounts for the day are made up.

A few stragglers still sit in the inn, while the horses wait patiently without, but finally the last straggler topples out and climbs uncertainly on to his horse. — It is touching to see how the horse even seems to try to help him over his difficulties, and assist him in preserving his balance by following as nearly as possible his toppling movements. As a matter of fact the temperance movement has made great strides in Iceland in later years.

It is the time of the light nights. Galloping and shouting, the motley crowd leave the town at eventide; but soon the



A small hay caravan.

pace is slackened, and the easy even trot begins, which makes such steady progress. One family after another reach home to their farms, where the dogs are barking; others keep on the whole night through — and a part of the next day may be —, before they reach their homesteads at the end of the valleys.

SKAGAFJORDS DALE

is divided by *Hjeradsvötn*, a large swollen river, drawing its waters from the melted ice from *Hofsjökull*, and from hill and dale. The valley is noted for its fine meadows; its magnificent frame of hills, — especially on the east side, where numberless small dales break into the hills —; and in fact for its pretty scenery in general. Three or four rows

of farms lie in the meadows on the slopes, principally on the west side. An exceptional breed of horses is raised in this verdant valley and the traveller who is fortunate enough to procure his mount from here will not regret it.

Home to be milked.



The summer is short in Iceland, far too short, and no time must be lost if all the necessary work is to be got through betimes. First and foremost the hay must be saved, for fodder for the cows, horses and sheep for the winter is an essential for these, and consequently for the Icelanders

themselves. Agriculture is scarcely known in Iceland. The traveller who traverses the valleys of Iceland in the summer sees therefore haymakers, men and women together, hard at work in the home fields of the farms or in the meadows; he hears every where the sharpening of the scythes and sees their rhythmic swing, or he meets the ponies loaded with large bundles of hay and being led in single file by a youth or girl, who is often mounted on the leader. May be the girl is sitting astride a mans saddle, red-cheeked and bonny and unconscious of impropriety. When the little caravan reaches home to the farm the hay is stacked in long ricks in the hay-yard or is put in sheds.

Away up the hillsides are the milch sheep, generally tended by an old man or a boy (smali). Towards evening the flock is driven home to the farm to be milked and the sing song cry of the shepherd, as he sends his dog up after them, may be heard.

The cows are run in the meadows or on the hills, and the horses likewise; but far far away on the other side of the fell many miles from the farms — and away up on the high-land plain which stretches towards the Glaciers, sheep and colts run wild the whole summer through.

On a Sunday all work ceases — unless the hay harvest makes it absolutely necessary to work — and the scythes and rakes find a resting place on the roofs of the houses. The people dress themselves, catch and saddle up the horses — and off they go at a rare pace to church. The women take the smallest children with them on the saddle, those a little older are secured on their own horses, and the bigger ones ride of themselves, the boys with their feet stuck in the stirrup straps in lieu of stirrups. The dogs bring up the rear. And so from all the farms a procession moves churchward over stick and stone and brook and beck. They meet early at the church, for there is much to talk over: The old ask the news, the young — they soon find one another and many a promise which bound for life and death, is given here in the churchyard among the grass-grown graves and crumbling crosses.

But the women, before entering the church pay a visit to the farm hard by, to lay aside their cloaks and hats or riding bonnets, and fasten the little tasselled caps on their heads; or perhaps, if it is a special festival, even to deck themselves out in the proper festal garb. This custom is however on the wane in the villages.



The house guard.

And now comes the priest, also mounted. After greeting his parishoners, he puts on his robes, while the bells begin to ring. Sometimes these are hung in a small shed out by the churchyard dike, sometimes in a tower on the church or outside the gable end under a projecting roof, and sometimes even, in some of the old icelandic churches built of turfs, they may

be found in the church itself under the roof. The last of these old churches are to be found in Skagafjords dale.

A choir is often formed of young women who lead the singing. They are all attractive, and neatly clad in becoming dresses.

The day before one may have seen them in their work-a-day attire raking hay in the home-fields, with dishevelled locks partly confined by a handkerchief at the back of the head, and with short skirts and thick brown woolen stockings fastened at the knee with leather garters. Firmly and boldly they marched about their work, smartly and ably they sprang over the ditches and puddles in their skin shoes.

Now the clergyman enters the pulpit; he reads his sermon, the usual practice in Iceland. After the service there may be Holy Communion or a Christening: though seldom the latter, for the children are generally christened at home. If the Parsonage is near the church it may happen that coffee is provided for the congregation in the „*Badstofa*“. This room is without ceiling. The windows are in the roof, and there is a row of bedsteads along each side; there is seldom a stove, but it is easily kept warm in the winter when all the farm hands are there, and all the lamps lighted. This room is both living room and sleeping room for all engaged on the farm, married and single, youths and maidens. Such an arrangement could scarcely be dreamt of in Reykjavik or at the trading stations, but in the country this old custom is still adhered to, and yet morals are in no way

worse here than where such indiscriminate mixing of the sexes is unheard of. Force of habit is so strong that young girls without shame undress and go to bed in the same sleeping room as the men.

Sometimes the end of the „*Badstofa*“ is partitioned off, and the master of the house and his wife sleep here. The traveler however is generally accommodated in the „*Stofa*“, a small dwelling house apart; but attendants and guides usually sleep in the common room.

Finally one little party after another mount their horses. The swains especially start off at a furious pace, while the girls hop boldly into the saddle and follow them.

A Sunday calm rests over the valley. There is no sound of sharpening scythes, no caravan with hay, no load homeward bound from the trading station. Only the merry mounted party wending home from church. Almost imperceptibly the wind stirs the grass on the roof of the old church — on the graves beside it, and on the roof of the farm house where the watch dog lies on guard. Up in the hills a fog encircles the highest peak; but down in the broad meadows by the rivers winding course, and on the dark clumps of houses, whence the blue smoke rises aloft, the sun shines, — and out on the horizon the blue sea is roaring.

Sunday evening comes. Here and there a neighbourly call is being paid at an adjacent farm. In the late twilight hours, when the hay is smelling sweetly in the home fields the callers finally mount their horses and turn their heads homeward.

The Skagafford Valley is 6 to 8 miles wide and 20 to 25 miles long. At the upper end it divides into the *Eystri-* and *Vestridalur*, long deep and narrow valleys uninhabited at their upper ends nearest *Hofsjökull*. From these valleys come the east and west glacier streams, the principle tributaries to Hjeradsvötn. Gradually the river reaches out of the hills into the more open country, and finally at its mouth it is split in two by the large Island *Hegranes*. Throughout its whole course however it is rapid and deep, and can only be forded at a couple of places and not even there at all times. Ferries, overhead ferries, fords, and bridges are used in communication between the two valley-sides. These are to be found at the following places:

Fording place in *Eystridalur* opposite *Ábær*, and at one point farther up in the uninhabited part.

Bridge in *Vestridalur* at *Goddalir*.

Overhead Ferry (Kláfr) at Flatatunga.

Ford opposite Silfrastadir.

Ford opposite Miklibær.

Ferry-boat „Akraferja“ between Flugumýri and Vídimýri.

Bridge over the east arm of Hjeradsvötn below Hofstadir and finally.

Ferry-boat over the west arm of Hjeradsvötn, west of He-granes, an old Thing place.

At the ferries the loose horses often swim over, while the people and pack-horses go on the ferry-boat. The ferrymans



The overhead ferry (Kláfr) at Flatatunga.

helper is on the spot active and smart at helping. The horses which are not packed are driven out into the water with stones. They keep together in a bunch with their heads upstream, so that the weaker horses swim in the lee of the stronger; snorting and groaning, with wide-stretched nostrils they swim gamely over. The moment they reach shore they shake the water from them and roll in the sand, then off to the nearest pasture.

FROM SAUDÁRKRÓKR TO GILHAGI

there is a choice of the two following routes:

- 1) *Along the west side of the valley*, passing Hafsteinsstadir, — Reynistadir, — Glaumbær, — Vídimýri (church built with Turfs), — and Mælifell; one day

2) *Along the east side of the valley* including a side trip to *Holar*, the old episcopal residence; two days.

1st Day: Saudárkrókr — Hegranes Hofstadir Holar (church) and back to Hofstadir (Turf church), where is to be spent the night.

2nd Day: Hofstadir — Flugumýri (Turf church) — Miklibær — Silfrastadir — over Nordurá ford — Flata-tunga — by overhead ferry over Hjeradsvötn and from there to Gilhagi. From the ferry one must first ride about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours in a southerly direction, before it is possible to turn W NW towards Gilhagi, because the country is very swampy on the road direct towards Gilhagi from the ferry.

3) *Finally a combination of these two routes* may be made, making use of ferries, bridges and ford. This will take two days.

Excursions in Eystri- and Vestridalur from Gilhagi take at least two days. Here are a number of deserted dwellings dating from the middle-ages, proving that the settlements at that period stretched much deeper into the country than at the present day.

KJÖLUR OR KJALVEGUR.

I. GILHAGI — HVERAVELLIR.

The routes over Kjölur both from *Húnavatns*, — *Skagafjardar*, and also from *Eyjafljardar Sysla* (Province), were used not only in the Saga period, but also in later days, fairly frequently in the summer. The members of the Legislative Assembly used to pass this way to attend the meetings of the „Althing“, and the routes were also traversed by the trading caravans in the time of the commercial monopoly, when goods could alone be purchased in Reykjavik. Later, when the Althing was dissolved (1800), and trading stations were established on the coast around the whole Island, the mountain routes lost much of their importance, and the people gradually discontinued the use of them.

When moreover in the 18th century several accidents happened on Kjalvegur this route was entirely given up. Now it is only traversed at long intervals by visiting tourists and harvesters passing from south to north, or by the shepherds when they take the sheep up to the broad summer-

pastures in the Spring and fetch them home again in the fall.

In 1897 I passed over Kjölur from south to north and it was at once clear to me that this ancient route could again become of importance if it were marked out by cairns, so that people could find the way even in foggy weather. Communication between the northern and southern districts would be greatly improved and it would be possible for an Ice-lander to cross the uninhabited region in from 2 to 3 days.

This consideration together with a desire to open up a



Our companions: Ámundi, Indridi, owner of Gilhagi, Bödvar, Magnús.

new route for tourists, brought me in 1898 again to cross Kjölur. I was to mark all essential places where cairns should be built to mark the route.

The artist Mr. *Johs. Klein* and myself had been carrying out some investigations that year in the western and northern districts of Iceland, and when these were completed our little caravan of five persons and a score of horses, with two tents, etc. etc. foregathered at Gilhagi farm on the evening of the 12th of August.

We were accompanied by three attendants: *Magnús Vigfússon*, a capital man who is now employed at the Government House in Reykjavik, *Bödvar Bjarnason*, at that time a theological student but who has since been ordained, and *Ámundi Ámundason*. We were further accompanied half way over Kjölur by two Icelanders from the Eyjafjörður

valley. One of these, *Indridi* was a peasant, 70 years of age, from a neighbouring farm to Gilhagi. He was a sturdy old man, who in spite of slight infirmity did not hesitate to accompany us when I told him that his special knowledge was indispensable to us for marking out the new bridle road through the wastes, which he knew so well. His son-in-law, the owner of *Gilhagi*, also came with us to accompany the old man home again.

Gilhagi farm lay behind us. We had bidden its hospitable dwellers farewell, and now we marched — the 13th August



Gilhagi.

— up the slopes above the farm with our little caravan, to push on into *Gilhagadalur*. The way led steadily upward towards the south west. After a good half hours ride we came to some sheep pens belonging to the owner of Gilhagi. This place is used every other year as a „Sel“, a mountain dairy for the cattle that are grazed on the mountains pastures in the summer. In the winter a man must daily go the long way up and back in all weathers to attend to the sheep, which are turned out as much as possible. He has here a warm shelter together with the wethers, where he can seek refuge in bad weather. This year there was no „Sel“; but two men and a couple of women, one of whom was married and had her two children with her, were lying up at the „Sel“ houses to cut the hay. Inside the naked turf walls of

the stables they had made themselves as comfortable as possible in their temporary home.

On we went up through Gilhagi dale until this opened out on to the Plateau. Here we caught a glimpse of Hofsjökulls white cap before the clouds came driving down and encircled it and all beyond it in their embrace. We now inclined more to the west and it was not long before we reached the so called *Litlisandur* an undulating desolate sandy and stony plain, where old Indridi nevertheless held the way inspite of the fog. It cleared up at intervals and away in the



Indridi and „Tóki“ crossing a river together.

south over the level Kjölur we saw the numerous mountains in the horizon. It was a splendid sight. After passing the sands we rode down a declivity and shortly after crossed over *Svartá*. Indridi had brought his dog „Tóki“, and it was amusing to see them cross the rivers together. At a sign from his master Tóki was on the horse's back in a flash, and in this way they crossed all the rivers.

After in all 5 hours slow riding, we reached the pretty lakes *Adalmannsvötn*. Here we made an halt at an old dilapidated „Sæluhús“ or hut for travellers and for shepherds when collecting the sheep in the fall. It was blowing strongly but Magnús made our coffee inside the Sæluhús, and we took our meal in its lee, while all our horses, freed of their burdens, grazed round about. The whistling swan breeds on



The „Sæluhús“ at Adalmannsvötn.



At Strangakvísl. — Hofsjökull in distance.

the lake in the summer, and we saw some of them in the water. In clear weather *Mælifellshnjúkur* may be seen from the lake.

Again we mounted and picked our way southwest in a thick fog, over the deserted *Thingmannahúls*, to the slopes at *Galtará* (6 hours ride from Gilhagi), where I had camped in 1897, and where there was passable pasturage for the horses. On that occasion we had a splendid view from here over *Kjölur*, but now there lay fog everywhere. From here we rode south along *Blanda* past *Vékelshaugar* hills, whose most westerly knold lie close by the bridle paths. Here again a *Sæluhús* and a little grass. It was evident that we were on a route that had been much used in its time, for at places there were as many as 20 old tracks side by side.

Until from ten to twenty years ago people from the northern parts came here to fetch icelandic moss. At that time at least one man from every farm was sent here with leading-horses to fetch the moss which was used as porridge, and many tents sprang up here on the highland plain, but now these excursions have ceased from lack of hands on the farms.

In the fog we passed the lake *Mannabeinavatn*, and shortly after crossed the many ramifications of the *Strangakvísl* to pitch our camp on the southern side. (8 hours ride from Gilhagi).



Crossing the Blanda.

We pitched the tents close by the foaming milk-white water streaming by. The next day we started out again over the still deserted plain. The weather was now good and the glaciers and mountains had a fine appearance on the horizon. Swarms of golden plover and curlew flew blithely over the plain, and once now and again we encountered a few sheep or colts. After a couple of hours ride we reached *Blanda*, where old Indridi and his son-in-law were to perform their master-piece and find a serviceable ford. With rare assurance the old man steered his horse out into the



Old bridle paths at the Kjölur.

water, with his son-in-law following closely at his side. For a while all went well, then suddenly both horses sank in; but coolly and considerately they were led back again. Several other places were then tried with no better success, but finally they found a ford that was not too deep; but it led direct to an activity, up which the horses had to be dragged. Now the rest of us crossed with all the pack horses, the water reaching as high as the horses' flanks.

Over *Biskupsthúfa*, where there is good pasturage, and where we found a dead horse lying, — mournful remains of a caravan that had recently passed, — Klein and I, accompanied by Magnús, reached the little *Rjúpnafell* (Ptarmigan fell)

and climbed to its summit. Meanwhile Indridi led the caravan to the hot springs of *Hveravellir*, where we were to camp.

On the way we had built small cairns at all difficult spots, especially at the river crossings. These temporary signposts were in the spring of 1899 replaced by larger and more permanent stone cairns, which Magnús, with the help of two others, built according to instructions.

We had now practically reached the divide between the north and south watersheds. From the top of the hill, *Rjúpnafell*, we had a capital view in a southerly direction over the great lava field, *Kjalhraun*, which occupies a large portion of the country between the northerly extremities of *Hofsjökull* and *Langjökull*. The north wind whistled and froze the marrow in our bones, but we crept for shelter behind a huge block of rock which stands on the summit of the fell like a gigantic *Bautastone* (stone monument). From here we



Dúfufell.

Kjalfell.

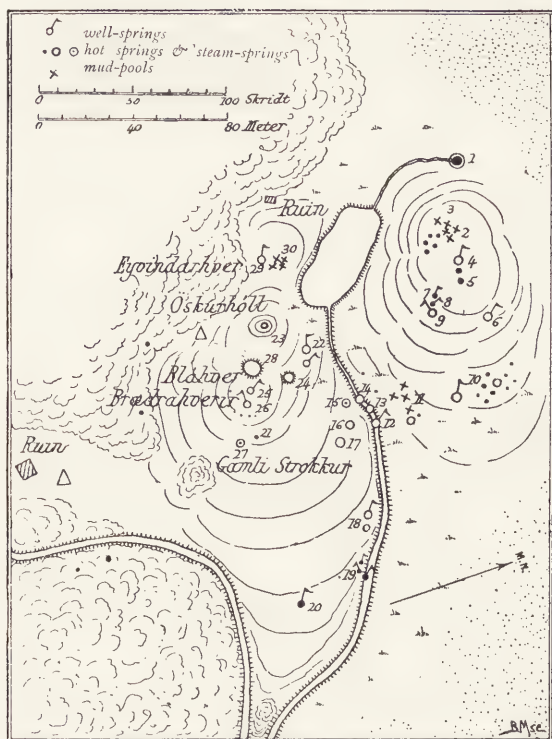
Hrútafell.

Kjalhraun with Strýtur, seen from Rjúpnafell.

watched our caravan disappear in the south west towards *Hveravellir*, where the steam ascended from the hot springs on the outskirts of *Kjalhraun*. This lava field lies like a very flat dome with a small sharp eminence at the top, which proved to be the edge of an extinct crater. From the crater (*Strýtur*) in prehistoric times the lava streamed out on all sides into the hollow between the two great glaciers, up towards the sources of *Blanda* in the north and right down to *Hvítá* in the south.

On the eastern border of the lava field lies *Dúfufell*, often confused with *Rjúpnafell* which lies more to the north; in the distance are seen the summits of *Kjalfell* and *Hrútafell* with their glaciers; and in the extreme west the white surface of *Langjökull* with its lower foothills. Looking behind us we had a splendid view towards the north right away to *Mælifellshnjúk*, and in the north east the heights north of *Hofsjökull*, with the smaller conical hill *Sáta* (Haystack) on the border of the latter.

When we had taken our photographs and sketches we led



THE HOT SPRINGS AT HVERAVELLIR.
(Surveyed by Author in 1898).

REFERENCE: The two Bræðrahverir (Nr. 24 and 26) are the most active. They spout to a height of 7–8 feet, with large escapes of steam. Around Nr. 26 are several quite small holes where jets of steam escape with a tooting noise. Of the other springs, Bláhver, with its diameter of nearly 25 feet, is most remarkable. It resembles a deep basin of marble, fringed with shining silicious incrustations around the edge and filled with clear pale blue water, the brink having an edging of brimstone. Nr. 24 has a very pretty goblet, which consists of a shallow cone of a pale white colour. — Gamli Strokkur is extinct. The temperature of the springs at the surface varies, the highest being 96 degrees centigrade.

the horses down the hill, and trotted over the flat undulating sand plain toward the hot springs at *Hveravellir*. As we approached these, we saw to our surprise four tents instead of two, and so concluded there must be strangers there, which also proved to be the case. They were the wellknown English glacier-climber and Iceland guide, Mr *H. F. Howell* (who was drowned a couple of years after in a river) and two English tourists. They were of course just as surprised as ourselves at the unexpected meeting.

Our tents were pitched on an ancient foursided site, supposed to have been previously occupied by a *Sæluhús*, or to have originated from a lawless, or perhaps from the *Landnams* time, when a certain *Torgeir* spent a winter here. *Hveravellir* was already in the time of the commonwealth a wellknown baiting place. In the vicinity of the springs, there is another similar spot, but this is only from the last century, when one *Eyvindur*, a sheepstealer, stayed here for a time to avoid capture. He cooked his food at the hot springs, and contrived his dwelling in the fissure of a lava mound, while he presumably „borrowed“ his provisions from the public pastures.

The hot springs are visible at a great distance from *Hveravellir*, and the white steam shows up sharply against the black background of lava. On nearer approach we see the milk white silicious surfaces and the flame coloured sulphur deposits in the outlet. The effect of these tones of colour is one of wondrous beauty.

There are two domes of silicious sinter, separated by a pond and a swampy hollow, the westerly being the least active. On these domes are large and small springs, some of which spout the water into the air, but only to the height of a few feet. Several of them make a whistling spurting sound, but most of them only bubble; nevertheless their splendid colours are exceedingly attractive. The activity of the springs is steadily on the wane. *Eggert Olafsson*, who visited them in 1752, speaks of „*Öskurhóll*“ as a bellowing eminence which ejected steam with a sound of thunder, whereas this has now entirely ceased. Also since *Henderson* visited the springs in 1815 their strength is appreciably less. *Thoroddsen* surveyed them in 1888, and his description of them, accompanied by a plan, appeared in the Swedish periodical „*Ymer*“ for 1889. In the lava south of the springs, may be seen further distinct traces of old springs, while in many places, steam still rises from cracks and fissures.



Hveravellir.

The next morning Mr *Howell* rode off to the north east to Eyjafjörður via *Vatnahjallavegur*, arriving at his destination two days later.

KJÖLUR II.
HVERAVELLIR — KJALHRAUN — HVÍTÁRVATN.

We stayed two days longer on the Kjalhraun camped at Hveravellir, principally to mark out the route over the east side of the lava field from Dúfufell to Kjalfell, but also to pay a visit to the *Strýtur* Crater. The lava field was on the whole very difficult to traverse, and the horses suffered considerably on the march over this waste, where blocks and mounds of black lava raised themselves in our way. In olden days already, some cairns were built on the route from Dúfufell to Kjalfell. A little south of Dúfufell for instance, are half a sevre such on an elongated depressed lava mound. The length of the mound is about 200 feet, with entrance



Strýtur, Hrútafell in distance.

from the west. In this so named *Grettishellir* (Grettirs hollow) the outlaw Grettir is said once to have dwelt.

Somewhat further south and nearer Kjalfell, are two cairns on a projecting spot in the lava. When I passed this part of Kjalhraun in 1897, a raven was croaking in the vicinity, and seeing a number of white objects lying by the cairns, I rode, with some difficulty, to the spot, under the impression that the raven was in the act of devouring a bird. I was however, very disagreeably surprised on discovering that what had attracted my attention were the bleached bones of horses and sheep, which evidently long ago had been packed up under the cairns in large quantities. Later I discovered that they probably originated from the great disaster already referred to, which happened in the autumn of 1780, and together with other similar catastrophies, brought about the disuse of the Kjölur route. In the autumn mentioned, some people from Skagafjord had gone to the south to buy sheep, and on their

homeward journey over Kjölur together with their flocks, they were taken by surprise by fearful snowstorms. Their friends at home in the north thought that they had remained in the south country for the winter, but when the spring arrived without their appearance, their friends became apprehensive, and a search party was sent out after them. Dead sheep and horses were found scattered round. One grey horse was even found right down by Svartá, an hours ride southwest from *Kjalfell*, at the spot since named *Gránanes* (Grey Naze). The horses were found with their packs still on. A man discovered the bodies of the party in a tent, and returned home to fetch assistance for their removal, but when he returned



Gránanes, Hrutáfell in distance.

with help, the bodies had disappeared. It was thought that they had been plundered in the meanwhile & disposed of. The remains of the animals have since been collected in heaps and the cairns raised over them. Tears came to the eyes of old Indridi at the sight of these mournful records, and at the thought of the lamentation and misery caused by the disaster.

While Magnus and Indridi were marking out the way over the Hraun, Klein and I sought an approach to the crater on horseback. We rode first of all west from Hveravellir around the nearest eminence of the lava field, then turned due south up through this, and after an hours ride reached the brink of a mighty crater. It was about 60 feet deep and 12—1300 feet wide. On its eastern edge, and also from two spots in the congealed lava of the pit, rose remains of old crater brinks in the form of pointed summits, whence

the crater receives its name of Strýtur. From the summit of the eastern edge rising in perpendicular walls 120 feet high above the bottom of the crater, we had a magnificent prospect far and wide over Kjalhraun, while Hrútafell, with its three glaciers and Fúlakvísl running beneath it, was especially fine.

This splendid crater is much more easily approached than for instance Hekla, and will probably, together with the Kjalhraun lava deposits and Hveravellir, be frequently visited by tourists in the future. The afternoon was far advanced when we returned to the camp, after having also made an excursion to the eastern side of the lava field. Old Indridi



At Fúlakvísl, near Thjófadalur.

and his son-in-law had now helped us steadfastly and their mission was ended. The route from Gilhagi to Kjalfell was now marked out with temporary cairns, thanks to their assistance, and Indridi was anxious to be home again, so towards the evening, the two rode off in a northerly direction over the sandbanks. — We remained over night at the camp, and the next morning, the 16th of August, started south again along the edge of Langjökull, west of Kjalhraun. We rode for two hours in a furious sandstorm to the so called *Thjófadalur* (Thiefs' dale), where a sheep stealer is said to have dwelt long ago, and where there is a grazing place.

From Thjófadal we passed by *Hrútafell* in sleet and showery weather, over some smaller hills in a southerly direction toward *Hvítárvatn* with *Fúlakvísl* on the right hand and *Svartá* on the left, our direction being *Bláfell* on the south

side of Hvítárvatn. From time to time, old bridle paths were met with.

After several hours over lava, sand plains, and water-washed naked sands, we descried the glaciers and the lake. In semi-darkness we reached a group of ruins on the west side of the lake, and here we pitched our tents in the proximity of the little *Tjarná*. Here I had led excavations in 1897 and had spent several days on the spot on that account, so Magnus was again able to take his old kitchen into requisition. We had been $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours on the road since leaving Hveravellir.

It was a' still and beautiful but dark evening. From the



Lava mounds.

tents we looked out again over the green pastures, where our horses, as on the previous occasion, grazed in company with a herd of half wild colts, to the lake, which appeared like a golden streak; and above it the glaciers, coming down between the snow-clad mountains from the great white-toned plane of Langjökull, over which it cleared up a little, while clouds and rain were noticeable in other places. The solemn stillness was only broken by the singing sound from the swans on the lake, or by the geese and ducks as they flew over the pastures, not to mention when the calving of the glaciers was proclaimed by a distant report, followed by a subdued roaring. A few icebergs floated in the lake. According to the late *Sig. Pálsson**) the north end of the lake

*) „Lysing á Hvítárvatni“ in „Þjóðólfur“ for the year 1883, 13th October and 2nd November, respectively.



Kerlingarfjöll, seen



Solfatares in the



from Gránanes.



Kerlingarfjöll.

is deep, at the southern end however the icebergs stranded in five or six fathoms of water.

The lake is rich in trout (bleikjur), while swans and different species of wild ducks and geese breed there in the summer, so that the sportsman can get a good bag. The spot is however, seldom visited by sportsmen or anglers. In 1897 we met a sixty years old peasant, Snorre, in Hrúni, who was well acquainted with the spot, and had hunted there from time to time, commissioned to procure swans, but otherwise neither fishing nor shooting is carried on in this abundant locality.

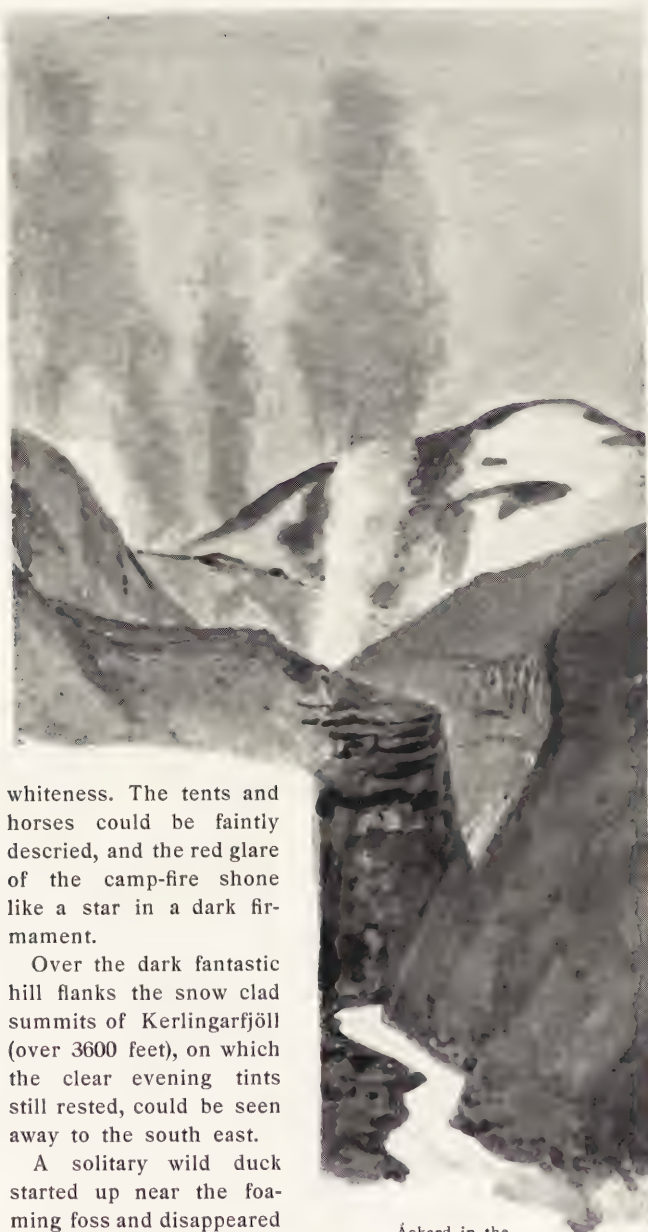
An old tradition relates that in olden times it was just as profitable to have a fisherman at Hvítárvatn as in the best fishing smack on the coast, which proves that the fishing was carried on diligently then. Another legend tells of a fisherman, who, when every one else had ceased to fish there, still persevered in his labour for a long while, but as he had no one to help him drag the net, hit on the idea of using a mare and colt, which he possessed, for the purpose. The foal he placed on one side of a bay, and took the mare to the other, after having made the net fast to her. The mare swam over to her foal and so the haul was made.

On the west side of the lake right opposite the spot on which we were camped, and close up to the glacier, is a hut called *Karlsdráttur*, which has a narrow opening on to the lake, and here are found the ruins of a small dwelling, a so named *veidiskáli* or fishermen's hut, where the above mentioned fisherman had his abode.

In the early middle ages, there lay two farms by the lake, but the colonization of Iceland's interior is long since abandoned, and today it is a long days journey to the nearest inhabited spot towards the south.

BRANCH EXCURSION TO KERLINGARFJÖLL.

An exceptionally interesting branch excursion may be made from Gránanes to the *Sulphur Springs* at *Kerlingarfjöll*, which I will describe from my experiences in 1897. *Gránanes* is a low grassy promontory in the fork of the two tributary rivers which form *Svartá*. We arrived there on the 8th August. It was twilight on the plains by the time the tents were pitched and the camp fire lighted, but from a little eminence, we could see that it was still light on the hilltops. On the dark plain the pools and the river were depicted in shining



whiteness. The tents and horses could be faintly descried, and the red glare of the camp-fire shone like a star in a dark firmament.

Over the dark fantastic hill flanks the snow clad summits of Kerlingarfjöll (over 3600 feet), on which the clear evening tints still rested, could be seen away to the south east.

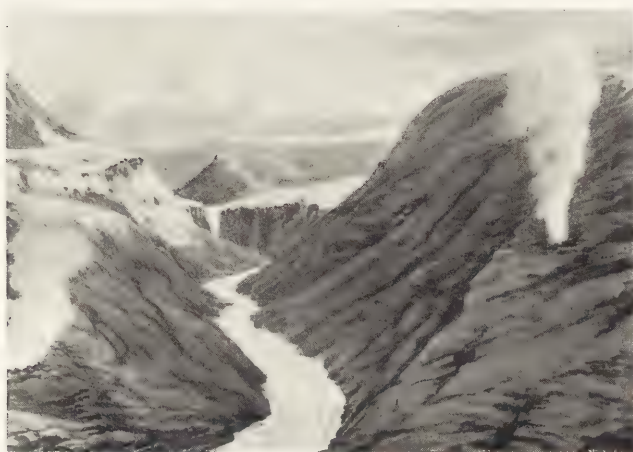
A solitary wild duck started up near the foaming foss and disappeared in the gloom along the

Askard in the
Kerlingarfjöll.

river, a single cry from a golden plover or curlew, and all was still, the only sound that reached us being from the horses munching their fodder.

The 9th August 1897 we struck camp and set out for Kerlingarfjöll. The country passed through here is an undulating highland plain, bare of vegetation and intersected by a number of streams and rivers, which flow partly from Hofsjökull and partly from the Kerlingarfjöll mountains, eventually joining to form Jökulkvísl.

From some heights north of Kerlingarfjöll we got a magnificent view of the mountain chain. About halfway between



At Áskardsá in the Kerlingarfjöll.

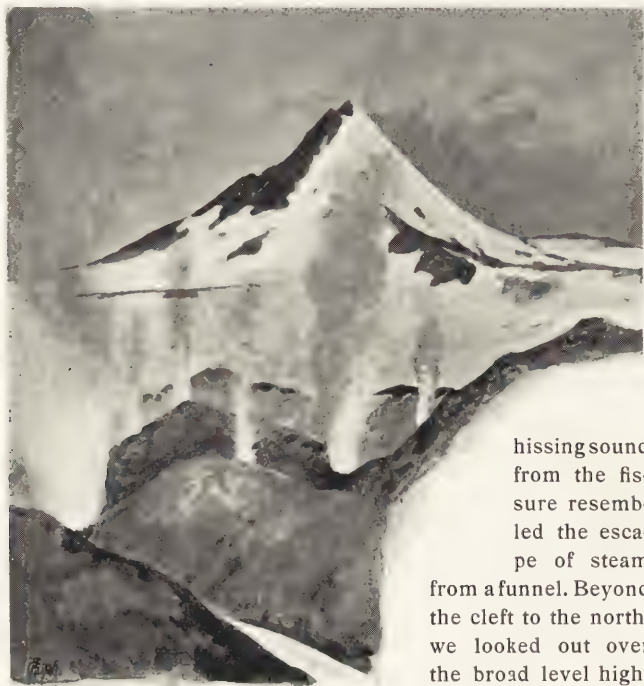
its eastern and western extremities is a valley, from which a deep-cut riverbed (*Áskardsá*) wends its way out to *Jökulkvísl*, which lay between us and the mountains.

A faint mist up in the valley indicated the position of the hot springs. The country around was everywhere naked and bare and almost without vegetation.

We passed over *Jökulkvísl*, where the water level was not very high. In the deepest spots however, it reached the horses flanks. In a little dale which we reached by passing over a ridge, we found a modest pasture with poorish grass, and pitched our camp here in the vicinity of a *Sæluhús*, used by the shepherds in the fall. We had been 3 hours on the way from Gránanes.

The 11th August we rode up to the valley with the boiling

springs in about an hour, the latter part of the journey being performed over steep snow-clad slopes. Leaving the horses at the mouth of the valley we proceeded on foot. Standing on the brink of the valley, we saw towards the east, Askardsá, winding its way through the grand giddy cleft down toward the camp. On the east slope of the valley, which was steep and unapproachable, we saw steam springing from a large chasm and rising into the air in a mighty column, while the



In the Kerlingarfjöll.

hissingsound from the fissure resembled the escape of steam from a funnel. Beyond the cleft to the north, we looked out over the broad level highland plain with Hofsjökull on the right.

Far far away on the horizon could be discerned a small conical summit — *Mælifellshnjúkur* — 70 miles away. Up the valley the perpetual snow lay on the peaks and stretched its long arms down into the dales. The country below the snow fields appeared as a baked up earth or clay mass, absolutely bare of vegetation, and pierced and furrowed by deep dales and clefts, which, as *Thoroddsen* remarks „fork like the branches of a great tree from one trunk“. On all sides, large and smaller columns of steam rose into the air.

The colours of this earth formation were light, but of great variety, slopes and crevices shining often with the most glaring colour, daubs of white, yellow, red, pink, blue and green being muddled together with the most outrageous discord, so as to form quite an eyesore. We wandered each for himself in these marvellous surroundings, which would have formed an excellent setting for the lower regions. I descended to the bed of the stream; removed my boots and waded forward, following the deep and narrow windings with soft steep clay-banks on either side. The water was a yellowish white colour and opaque, so that I could only proceed with the greatest circumspection. As melted ice and snow were mixed with the hot water from the springs, it was quite cold. One moment I passed steaming springs, the next small seething reservoirs also steaming, or I heard a crackling sound like as though small water columns were spouted into the air. Here and there dark fissures emitted rumbling or hissing sounds from the bowels of the earth, accompanied by rising mists of steam. At short intervals small valleys branched to right and left, and I saw springs steaming in all and heard their seething and bubbling. As I advanced, the banks became less steep and I ventured myself upon them. After a couple of hours progress I reached the innermost springs. Here the valley spread itself out and assimilated with the surrounding mountain slopes. It was interesting to see where, in some places, the small glaciers spread themselves round the springs; here it appeared as though the steam arose direct out of the snow. Occasionally the snow reached right down to the river, and formed bridges of ice and snow over it, under which I passed. Large quantities of sulphur, obsidian and pumicestone abounded everywhere.

After climbing a mountain top and obtaining a view of the territory to the south, I returned to the camp the same way I had come.

The grass here was now nearly all eaten up, and there was no more firewood in the neighbourhood, so it was high time to take our departure, but before leaving, we scaled a mountain summit to get a view over Kjölur.

Wherever we turned there was a surprising variation and richness in the scenes spread out before us. Their beauty was quite uncommon, and our eyes could scarcely conceive at once all that we saw. To right and to left, before and behind us, were pictures innumerable, each with its own attraction.

Due north we looked out over the low plain stretching away mile upon mile, dark brown and monotonous it lay before us. Swamps and rivers, small lakes and streams glistened in the proximity of the glaciers. Peaceful and quiet, attractive and pleasant — apparently with hindrance — it stretched itself as far as the eye could reach away to the coast-hills of the north. Here the picture changed again. It was as if quite other regions beckoned to us from away out there in the infinite distance. The mountains lay like a dark jagged streak at the extremity of the plain, and central in this chain Mælifellshnjúkur raises its conical summit high above the rest, dividing the horizon into two symmetrical parts of equal dimensions on either side.

The warm blood-red tints of the glowing evening sun lightened up the heavens over this distant horizon, and seemed to tell of inhabited regions and snug homes there.

To the west on the plain lay here and there isolated pyramidal flat-topped hills in soft velvety tones (*Kjalfell, Dúfufell, Rjúpnafell*), forming the most advanced outposts among Langsjökulls protecting foothills and extending arms.

A canopy of clouds hid the uppermost plains of *Langjökull*. Over the glacier's perpetual ice hung large whitish — often silver-coloured — irregular and enigmatical fog clouds.

Twilight brooded in the vales between the steep lofty heights of the foothills.

The clouds had gathered on the flat glacier summit of the splendid foothill *Hrútafell* like a light thin pillow, the reflection from which fell glimmering over the mountain side on snow-clad clefts and crevices.

A grand, noble, mighty picture.

On the right of the plain lay *Hofsjökull's* great ice-field. Here the arc of the great glacier showed up distinctly and sharply against the clear transparent heavens, which had a greyish tint.

Behind us lay the warm light yellow Lipari summits of *Kerlingarfjöll* partly covered by snow. Some solitary sheep ventured on the snowy slopes for the refreshing coolness. The narrow valley with its dizzy depths wound down from the mountains in a dark serpentine streak. The farthest summit towards the east (*Lodmundur*) was formed of a grand almost coal-black peak with white shining strips of snow. Never from one spot have I seen such an abundance of beauteous scenery. All was silent and still except the rumbling and seething in the valley of the hot springs. A raven's



Hvítravni with the Hvítá. — Skagfirðingavá in the foreground.

hoarse croak broke the peaceful stillness. We mounted our horses and rode back to Gránanes.

KJÖLUR III. HVÍTÁRVATN — GEYSIR.

The river *Hvítá* in the southwest, forms the outlet of Hvítárvatn, and receives immediately below the lake, the waters of Jökulkvísl, which has a rapid current and an abundance of water brought down from the Kerlingarfjöll watershed, where it will be remembered we crossed on our way from Gránanes. Several other tributaries from the west join it further down, so that *Hvítá* becomes at once a deep and rapid river, which as a rule cannot be forded, also on account of its bed, which like all glacial rivers, is soft and changeable.

In olden times, not far below the lake, there was a very difficult ford „*Skagfirdingavad*“. It had however been impassable for some years, and in order that the shepherds could cross from the parishes in the Geysir district to the country east of Hvítárvatn, where they curiously enough have „*Afrjett*“ (grazing rights), boat-building materials were transported right up *Hvítá*'s head at the lake, and two boats were built, which did good service for a long time. We however found them in such a leaky condition that they were unusable, and had therefore to essay the ford. We broke up our camp on the east side of Hvítárvatn the 17th August, and rode away from the beautiful green pastures over the flat swampy ground towards the ford. After one and a half hours ride we reached a *Sæluhús*, which lies on a low hill close by where the boats crossed at the point where *Hvítá* bends to the east. As we were unacquainted with the exact locality of the ford, we had to search for it. Our attendants, especially *Magnús*, were remarkably smart and daring; several times they tried in vain, but it was too deep and the horses sank in. At last however they succeeded in finding it.

About 500 yards southeast of the *Sæluhús* — down stream — one rides down a declivity out to quite a small holm and from this to a second and third — still keeping not far from the left bank. From this last islet one swings across the stream (rather a little against than with it), to the north end of a small island, and from this against the stream to a large island, and so to the other bank.

The ford is far from safe, for only a yard or two to the side lies a soft bottom and quicksands. *Magnus* for instance went head first over his horse through its forelegs sinking in

suddenly. How he saved himself I don't even now quite understand, but in a trice both he and his horse were up again. His arms had been so deep in the quicksand, that it had gone up his sleeves from his wrists right up to the shoulders. Shortly after I myself got too far to one side, in mid-stream, and my horse began to swim down stream. Magnús saw it happen, and driving his heels into his horse was beside me in a moment, while the water splashed up on all sides around us. Although there was no great danger, I shall not easily forget the great promptness with which he came to my assistance. It was characteristic of the man, he had here, as always, his eyes about him. I had however got wet and had to change my clothes, and as it was raining, we pitched our tents immediately beyond the ford, and remained here until next day. From the top of the activity on which we were camped, we enjoyed a wonderfully beautiful prospect over the Jökull with its glaciers, the lake, the plain, and Hvítá, which flowed in a whitish serpentine sweep along the almost black, dusky, stony plain, „Hvítárnes“ (Plate III).

The next day, the 18th, we rode on towards *Geysir*, after first having marked out the ford. The boats however have since been put in order.

From the fording place we rode along Hvítá to the south, passing east of „*Bláfell*“. It is also practicable to ride west of this mountain, whereby the swampy ground between it and Hvítá is avoided. Nearly the whole landscape between Bláfell and Geysir is an undulating desolate sandy and stony plain, where the soil has been washed away by the rains. Here and there stand small earth and sand knolls with a little vegetation on their tops, the remains of former splendour. The landscape was however beautiful in spite of its disconsolateness. Hvítá growled and foamed in the cleft on the left. On the far side we saw the territory I had traversed in 1897. Here lay a number of farms in the middle ages, but now all is deserted and desolate. On our right was *Langjökull* with its detached foot hills: *Jarlhettur*.

After 8 hours ride through this most desolate waste, we reached *Gullfoss*, the vapours from which had been visible for some time.

This waterfall is one of the sights of the whole tour. Hvítá flows here above the fall between comparatively broad banks, and then is suddenly narrowed and falls into a deep narrow chasm between the basalt stratum, whence the water is sucked aloft like fine dust particles into the air.

From Gullfoss to Geysir is one and a half to two hours ride. The country is a little swampy, and it is not always easy to find the way, but we are now again in inhabited parts with a little farm here and there, and one can, if desired, obtain an extra guide in the form of a boy or girl from one of these, who is mounted in a trice ready to lead the way. On the whole it is often just in the peopled districts that it is especially difficult to trace the way, because there are so many small bridle paths, none of which are distinguished in any way, so that one often is misled.

We descried the vapours from the Geysirs on the far side of *Tungufljót*, and crossing this by the ford*), which is not always to be depended upon, were soon at the foot of Laugarfell with its twenty odd steamings springs among which the grand magnificent Geysir. The slope at the foot of the hill is strewn with reddish-yellow silica, sand and clay. We camped at the



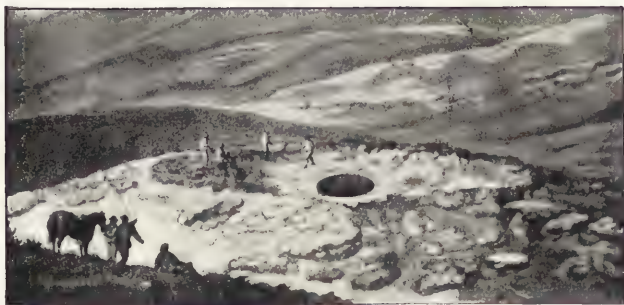
Gullfoss.

usual spot just south of Geysir, where there is a little grass.

The *Geysir springs* are located on ground previously belonging to the farm „*Laug*“, but now owned by an Englishman, who however, has not been heard of since the purchase. This was my third visit at Geysir, and I have been there once since in 1905. The first time was in 1896, fourteen days before the earthquake, and I was there again the next year, so that I could observe the changes that had taken place under the earthquake.

The first shock occurred on 26th August 1896 at 9-50 p. m. (*Th. Thoroddsen* „*Vulkaner og Jordskælv paa Island*“) just as people were going to bed, — 60 farms were destroyed

*) At present time there is built a bridge over the *Tungufljót*.



Geysir, from an old English picture.

in a moment here in the south. — On the morning of the 27th August severe shocks were again experienced, which completed the destruction. In the days from the 27th Aug. to the 4th September, the earthquake movement continued with slight shocks and minor concussions all the time, so that the people in the affected districts lay in tents at night. The

5th Sept. at 10-30 in the evening the south country was again shaken by a violent shock, which lasted about a minute and destroyed over 100 farms in

Floi. The mountain sides were enveloped in dust clouds from the countless hill slides, which plunged down with such ear-splitting roaring and booming that



Geysir in eruption, from an old English picture.

people could not hear one another even when shouting. The same night at 2 oclock came a still more frightful earthquake, the most severe of them all. In scarcely half a minute 30 farms in Ölfus lay in ruins. This night the shocks were so violent that no one could stand upright, and the people stretched themselves on the ground clinging fast to rocks and tussocks. The shocks were accompanied by fearful boomings and terrible crashes, while the earth rocked like being tossed in a high sea, and to increase the horror of it all, the bells rang as if for a funeral.



A little guide to Gullfoss.

During the first ten days of the earthquake period it seems, according to what I gathered from some of the inhabitants of the district, that no alteration was noticed in the Geysirs, but under the great shock on the 4th September, they all spouted at once, and several new ones were formed at the same time. The great Geysir received renewed vitality and spouted several times daily. From 10 a. m. July 27th 1897 to 10-30 a. m. the 28th for instance, I observed at least fourteen eruptions. On three of these occasions the jet emitted reached a height of from 100 to 120 feet, but the other times a height of 20 to 30 feet was seldom exceeded. The basin, which usually is full with sea green crystal clear water which flows away through small gutters in the brink, is only emptied after the very highest spouts, when the throat is also emp-

tied as far down as one can see. After the eruptions the basin is filled little by little with water again. The largest spouts last about 10 minutes, and previous to their commencement an underground booming is heard for some mi-



The great Geysir in eruption.

nutes. During the eruptions, skaking of the earth is noticed, some times quite a good distance from the Geysir, even up to 7 or 8 minutes walk from it in fact. In the big spouts the column of boiling water rises half a dozen times. It begins with large steam-bubbles which burst in the swelling sur-

face, then comes a moment's quietness, and then the eruption continues with small springs gradually increasing, until toward the close, when there come a couple of high jets. The foaming column of water dissolved into finest raindrops is more and more enveloped by clouds of vapour until the eruption ceases with a couple of small jets. A stone thrown into the Geysir when it is spouting is at once thrown into the air again. The surface of the basin is usually enshrouded in white vapour, which prevents the water-spouts being seen in their full splendour. The intervals between the emissions



Fata.

vary greatly, the shortest I have observed being about half an hour. The single springs follow often immediately upon one another, in such a manner that before the first is finished a second commences; but again just as often there is a moment's quiet between two jets. — Geysir had, in the beginning of the 19th century, an eruption once or more in twenty four hours, but gradually their frequency decreased, until shortly before the earthquake in 1896, at which time it only spouted about once every five days.

On the accompanying sketch map (page 59) all the springs are shown. The principle changes which took place during the earthquake are as follows:

Geysir activity was at once increased but is now again on the decline.

Konungshver (Nr.2) sprang up in an old extinct basin 15 feet in diameter. It spouts 2 to 3 feet, and water ouses out of the side of the basin. Nr 3 is a small spring. The spectacle-formed basin *Blesi* (the blazing, shining). Nr. 5, is 40 feet long by 16 feet wide; it had previously only one outlet, but has now two, and the water bubbles up. The composition of the water is also thought to have changed as the petrification now has a blueish tint, whilst it was quite yellow or reddish yellow before. Neither had it any noticeable taste, whereas now it contains somewhat more sulphur, although



Blesi.

not more than that we could use it to our tea. In the east outlet from *Blesi* lies a new spring called *Stjarna* (Nr. 4), which has also risen since the earthquake. Is is said to have spouted a few times, and a rumbling boom is heard from two small holes 5 feet deep. Nr.6 „*Fata*“ (Bucket), is a little spring 13 feet by 9 feet wide and 2 feet deep, where the water sometimes sinks so far down that it cannot be seen.

Nr.7, *Strokkur* (Butter churn), arose under an earthquake in 1784. Previously it boiled up to the brink, and could generally be made to spout by plugging its mouth with turf, but it is now quite inactive, and only contains dark tepid dirty water, which froths up at long intervals, giving a subsequent higher water level. The throat of the spring sinks into the depths abruptly from the ground level. The socalled

„Little Geysir“ or *Otherrishola* (Nr.8), springs to a height of 12 to 18 feet several times daily from two small oblong deep holes, about one foot long by from 5 to 10 inches, surrounded by red clay.

Little Strokkur is a well (2 feet wide) which boils violently. Near it lie a similar smaller well with yellow water, and some blue-grey sloughs, one or two of which spout a little.

Thykkuhverir is a group of large and small basins with bubbling seething boiling water. Some of them were nearly



Haukadalur.

dry before the earthquake, but after this they burst up again. The largest are *Sísjódandi*, (constantly boiling) Nr. 13, which seethes up about one and a half feet; and Nr. 12, which still spurts to a height of about two feet.

In several places, especially by the outlet from Little Geysir, are sloughs and mud pools with red, blue, or reddish yellow water or deposit. They bubble with a grunting or sputtering noise.

Tourist accommodation has now been provided in a tourist hut close by the Geysir springs with good beds and catering during the summer.

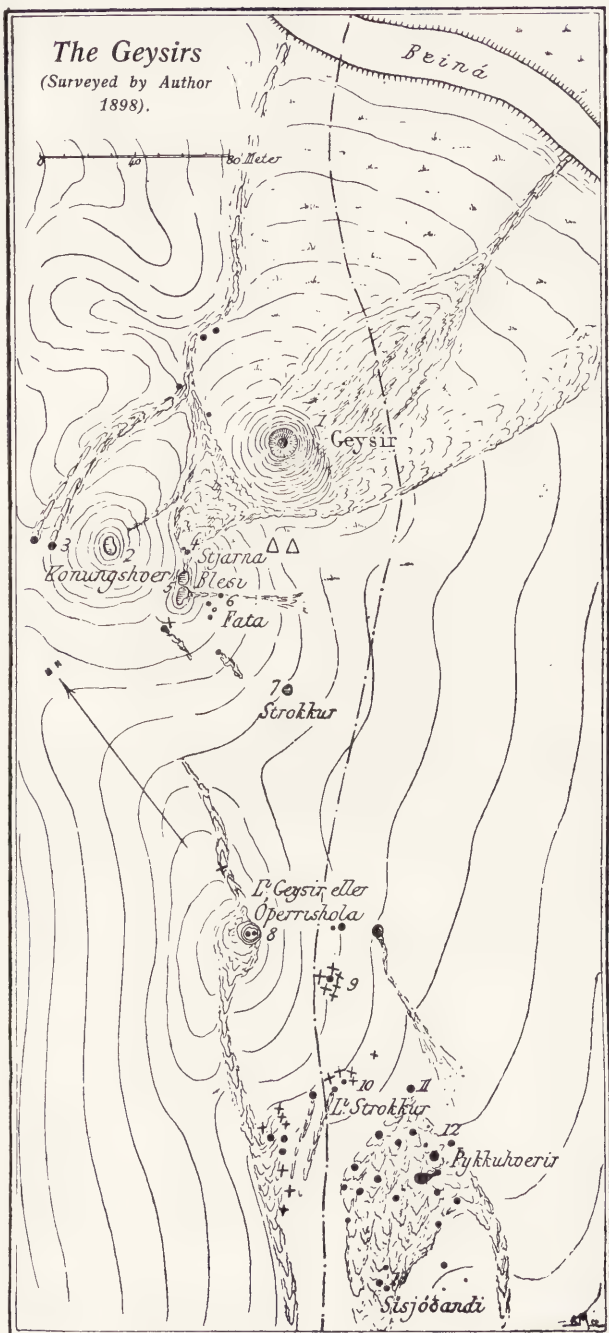
In the neighbourhood of the Geysirs lies the farm *Haukadalur* with a church. The farm is one of the farthest from the coast in Iceland.



The Geysirs at Haukadalur. (This sketch is taken from the point marked ★ on the map page 59).

The Geysirs

(Surveyed by Author
1898).



On the church door is a round plate with a ring to which various legends attach. The plate is however perhaps an old saddle ornament.

In olden times Haukadal was a chieftain's seat, and the renowned Haukadal family, which played such an important political part at the close of the commonwealth, originated here. On this spot Are Frode, the father of Iceland's historical literature, spent his young days.

From Geysir we rode the usual way to *Thingvellir* in about 10 hours and from there to Reykjavik.



OVER THE SPRENGISANDUR.

THE road over the Sprengisandur must be commenced from *Húsavík* or from *Akureyri* in the *Eyjafljórdur*. In the first case a southerly direction is taken to *Bárdardalur* in the *Sudur-Thingeyjarsýsla*.

If the traveller starts from *Akureyri* he follows the road eastward over the mountains (*Vadlaheidi*), down to the picturesque *Fnjóskárdalur*, here crossing the *Fnjóská* at a ford, near to which is a splendid birch-wood. The parsonage *Háls* (neck) is passed, then he enters the *Ljósavatnsskard*; and the lake *Ljósavatn* (the bright lake) soon comes into view. It contains plenty of trout. Good accommodation at the farmhouse.

(*Akureyri*—*Ljósavatn* 6 hrs.).

From *Ljósavatn* a short distance to the *Godafoss* a splendid waterfall in the *Skjálfandi* (the trembling). This stream is followed in southerly direction through the *Bárdardalur* to the most southern farm *Mýri* in the valley.

(*Ljósavatn*—*Mýri* a long daysride.)

On August 12th 1902, I left *Akureyri* for *Sudur-Thingeyjarsýsla*. *Sigurdur Sumarlidason*, an active young man, who had spent several years in North America, had been engaged to accompany me on this journey. He had never crossed the Sprengisandur, but in the *Bárdardalur*, *Jon Oddsson*, an uncommonly plucky and active peasant was to join us. In 1897, *Jon Oddsson* accompanied me across the sands, and was later on, commissioned by the Deputy-Governor to superintend the erection of cairns along the northern part of the road. This work, begun in 1901, could not be continued before it had been decided which direction the route should take through the difficult part of the country along the glaciers.

After having made a little detour by *Mývatn*, I left the vicarage at *Skútustadir* on August 19th and crossed the moor to the *Bárdardalur*. It was bitterly cold, and had been snowing in the mountains, so we did not begin our journey to the interior with the brightest prospects. After a ride of 6 hrs. we arrived at *Bjarnastadir* (a farm), having traversed an undulated tract of land, covered with stunted willow and birch, and where flocks of ptarmigans frequently rose in front of our horses. The drifting sand had done great damage on the border of the valley through which the *Skjálf-*

Godafoss.



andi flowed like a silver streak. The farm looked like an oasis in the sands.

We found Jon Oddsson at Bjarnastadir, where we spent August 20th preparing for the expedition.

The greatest difficulty we should have to contend with, would not be the fog, nor the unfordable rivers, nor the glaciers, but the lack of pasturage for the horses. We had

also to take into consideration, that the unusually cold weather they had had in Iceland that year, would have injured the scanty vegetation on the highland. It was therefore necessary to have as few and as able horses as possible.

Our equipment was exceedingly plain. Each man took one travelling suit with him, besides an overcoat, and two changes of undergarments; and we decided to take one tent in which we could all three sleep. I took a camp-bed which weighed 7 lbs., and some blankets. My two companions were to sleep on the sacks of hay for the horses, and on the skins



Jon Oddsson and Sigurdur Sumarlidason.

which were thrown across our saddles, their coats and overcoats to serve as covering for them.

In the usual Icelandic cases, we packed our cooking apparatus, as well as our provisions, consisting of boiled, salted and smoked mutton, dried fish, bread, butter etc. etc. (Icelandic products) besides some conserves.

I had three riding horses, which I rode alternately, each of the men had two, in all twelve, pack-horses included, quite a little horse caravan. We had to turn out every morning between 4,30 and 5 o'clock before sunrise. We lighted a fire to boil the kettle, made our toilet at a neighbouring stream, had a good breakfast, as we would get nothing to eat before evening, then packed our things. Finally we got

hold of the horses that were grazing in the pasture, undid the ropes with which their forelegs were tied together in order to prevent their straying away, and saddled them. Although we wasted no time, all this took $2\frac{1}{2}$ —3 hrs., so we could not decamp until about 8 o'clock.

For twelve hours we went on, halting several times, to give the horses time to rest, and also when I wanted to reconnoitre.

The day passed quickly, and before we were aware of it, it was evening; when we came to a pasture, we unpacked and pitched our tent. The horses rolled in the sand, glad to be rid of their burden. We tied their forelegs together, and they hobbled off to graze. We went to a river to refresh ourselves, then took our supper. After we had lighted the candles, we smoked a pipe, and went early to rest, but we very rarely slept soundly; we often awoke, partly on account of the cold, but especially for fear of the horses attempting to go homeward, or to better pastures, in spite of their being tied. We were obliged to get up several times during the night, to ascertain if they were all there, and soon discovered that this fear was not groundless. We had to be very careful, especially where the grass was scarce and poor, but even where this was not the case, the animals sometimes felt an irresistible inclination to go back towards the north, whence they had come. A big grey pack-horse bothered us more than any of the others; it had several times broken the rope with which its legs were tied, and then wandered off, followed by its companions. When this happened, and it was discovered in time, we hurried after the fugitives, and drove them back at a rapid pace. After this, they stood sulking for an hour or so, as if they repented of what they had done, but no sooner had we fallen asleep, than they started off again.

We left *Bjarnastadir* in the morning of August 21st. The object of our expedition was to explore the *Sprengisandur*, in order to find the best routes, partly to the south, to *Árness-Sysla* and *Rangárvalla-Sysla*, along the *Thjórsá*, partly to the north, and if possible direct to the interior of the *Eyja fjardardalur*.

The reader will perhaps be surprised to learn that these districts were formerly so slightly known; the reason has already been alluded to in the introduction. Iceland peasants who go every year in autumn to the interior of the country to look for their sheep and lambs, are acquainted with those parts used

as joint pastures, but with no others. To obtain correct information, one should have to assemble a number of people from the north and south of the country, and even if this could be done at great expense and loss of time, there would still be many remote parts unknown to them.

Professor Dr. phil. *Th. Thoroddsen* had several times visi-



A sheep fold.

ted the country around the Sprengisandur, where he had made important discoveries east of the *Skjálfandi* in 1884, south of the *Kaldakvísl* in 1889, west of the *Thjórsá* in 1888 and at the north end of the *Hofsjökull* in 1896. Jon Oddsson however, knew the greater part of the country north, as well as south of the Sprengisandur, but only on one particular route. We hoped to be favoured with fine weather, so as to be able to find our way in those parts, which were unknown to us. It

may be mentioned, that the main route over the Sprengisandur had occasionally been used by travellers.

Mýri, and *Litla-Tunga* in its vicinity, are the only inhabited farms in the Bárðardalur, but it is not long since that *Ishóll*, a farm about 6 miles to the south, was also inhabited. The forming of settlements here, as well as in other districts in the interior of Iceland, has greatly decreased. In the middle ages there were several farms in the interior of Skjálfandafjót, traces of which are still to be seen. Several proofs of this depopulation have been found since 1897, when I undertook to explore this part of the country.

It was now warm, there was not a cloud on the sky, and in the clear atmosphere, rising above the *Öðáðahraun*, we saw the snow capped summits of the *Askja*, the *Dyngjufjöll*, and the *Herdubreid*. We rode from *Mýri* southward to *Ishóll*; on the beautiful lake close by, two loons were swimming. We stopped near the farm and rested, while little birds flew twittering about us, and the curlew whistled in the distance. We visited the ruins of a large farm in the neighbourhood, and then rode a short way towards the west, ascending the whole time, then down into the *Mjófidalur*, so as to get up to the highlands through this valley. Now and then we came across young cattle, lambs and sheep, that grazed here in summer without the care of shepherds or herdsmen.

We proceeded to a good pasture *Ytri-Mosar*, where we encamped. While taking our supper here, we heard a roaring outside the tent, and, peeping out, we saw a herd of young bulls, which had followed us and were now attacking our horses and tent; we tried to frighten them, and to chase them away, but in vain; at last Jon grew impatient, and mounted one of the horses, took his whip and rode right in the midst of them. The bulls bellowed, kicked, and gored the ground with their horns, but after they had felt the whip, they fled, pursued by Jon. They quickly disappeared in a tremendous cloud of dust. Half an hour after, Jon returned after having chased them for about two miles; they did not show themselves again. We now made our beds, the first time on this expedition. Jon was in high spirits at the thought of passing some time in the mountains he was so fond of. When I said: „Good night“, he answered: „Thank you“. Afterwards. I heard him exclaim: „How delightful it is to be in the mountains“. He was right, such peace and comfort as that of one's tent of an evening in the highlands when the horses are grazing

outside is only found in nature. The more fatiguing the day has been, the more one enjoys the moment when the lights are put out, and one is about to fall asleep. If it is raining and blowing, the tent seems more cozy than ever, the only thing which troubles one being the thought of the horses running off.

It was lovely weather when we started on August 22nd. We soon passed the next pasture in the *Mjófidalur* (*Innri-Mosar*), and then upward over barren plateaus, towards an elongated hill, the *Kidagils-Hnúkur*, for a couple of hours; the *Vatnajökull*, and the *Tungnafellsjökull* covered with ice and snow, appeared in sight, but rain and fog soon came on, and when we reached *Kidagil* I decided to pitch the tent and recognise it. *Kidagil* is a deep ravine, about three miles long, surrounded by beautiful basaltic rocks, through which a river flows, on to the *Skjálfandi*. The *Kidagilsá* has three tributaries, all coming from the sands in the west. North of the river, on a slope opposite the ravine, there is a miserable grass-plot called *Kidagil*; here there is only sufficient fodder for a couple of horses for one night. South of the ravine and opposite the first pasture, there is a larger one, *Áfangatorfur*, but here too the grass is scanty, there being fodder only for six to eight horses for one night. These pastures are about twenty minutes walk from the *Skjálfandi*. In 1897, we had pitched our tents in the neighbourhood of *Áfangatorfur*, at that time there was rather much grass, but the drifting sand had now completely spoiled this place; such is always the case in the highland, where grass is a rare substance. The ruins of three or four houses, south of the junction of the *Kidagilsá* and the *Skjálfandi* prove that this part of the country was formerly much more fertile. The sand and earth that covered the ruins have been blown away; we saw bones, bleached by the sun, among the ruins, and I even found nails, and other similar things. This must have been the site of a mountain dairy or a farm.

It rained during the night, and we had to watch the horses till sunrise. It did not clear up till twelve o'clock next day, when we again made a start, partly because it would be impossible to pass another night here owing to the scarcity of grass. From the place where we pitched our tent, there is half an hour's ride towards the west, along *Kidagil*, and across sandy rocky ground, before one reaches the place where the *Sprengisandur* crosses the ravine. The cairns erected by *Jon Oddsson* and others begin here, and indicate the

road, a good way southward in the northern part of the Sprengisandur.

In 1897 I went from Kidagil direct to *Eyvindarkofaver*, at the south end of the *Hofsjökull* in $9\frac{1}{2}$ hrs only. This time I would not go so far, but break the journey by going to the *Tungnafellsjökull* where (as Jon said) there was good grass to be found in a valley (called *Jökuldalur*). By making this halt, the ride across the Sprengisandur becomes very much shortened, and in future one will be able to ride from the *Mjófdalur* direct to this pasture, without stopping at Kidagil where the pasturage is only poor.



Halt on the Sprengisandur. The *Hofsjökull* in distance.

After a ride of $2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs from Kidagil we were on a level with the elongated hill *Fjórdungsalda* to the west of which lies the lake *Fjórdungsvatn*; this year it was very dry, there was no vegetation around it, and not a bird was to be seen on it.

The *Hofsjökull*'s north east corner is now seen, and we proceed southward along the *Fjórdungsvatn*, following a row of cairns. At the S. end of the lake, we branched off in a S. E. direction towards the S. end of the *Tungnafellsjökull*. There was a dense fog prevailing, but we went on following a horse track. Jon said this was from the preceding summer, when the workmen who were building up the cairns, had a few horses grazing in the *Jökuldalur*.

We passed *Tómasarhagi*, a big yellowish mossgrown dip, where some sheep were grazing, and following the *Fjórdungakvísl* we came into the *Jökuldalur*, after $2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. quick riding from the *Fjórdungsalda*.

It was late in the evening when we got there, flocks of geese flew screeching through the valley, apparently provoked at our taking possession of their home, but we could not avoid doing so, as the horses had to be provided with grass.

We pitched the tent on flat but rather marshy ground, close to which there was good grass, even Angelica grew in abundance, on a slope near the tent. The mountains were hidden by the fog, and a cold wind was blowing. By midnight everything was in order and we retired to rest.



On the Sprengisandur. The Fjördungsalda in distance.

The next day, August 24th, there was a dense fog and drizzling rain, and as we wanted to get a view from the mountains, we had to wait for favourable weather; meanwhile we strolled about the deep valley. A lamb was seen here and there in the clefts of the rocks, appearing like a white spot; on one occasion the spot seemed stationary, and on investigation, we discovered that it was a dead sheep from the previous winter. Later on we found other dead sheep, the marks on their ears showing that they were from the Bardardalur. These poor sheep had evidently escaped the notice of the men who in 1901 went to the mountains to drive them down, and following the river, they had gone up the valley. As a rule, sheep cannot live a winter through in the interior of Iceland. There is only one instance on record.

It is incredible how far the sheep can roam. Jon told us

that some people from the Bárdardalur had once driven their sheep (some ewes) to the south part of the country, in order to have the race mixed. This was in July; on the way back, some of the sheep ran away from their owners near the *Búdarháls*, and in January one of them came down in good condition to Mýri, after having crossed the Sprengisandur in mid-winter.

In the evening when the fog lifted, I rode up the mountains, and obtained a beautiful view of the sands and the glaciers. On the rocky sterile mountains we saw some snow-sparrows and a ptarmigan here and there.

On the night of August 24th we had beautiful moonlight; the wind was from the south, but it was very cold. After sunrise on the 25th the clouds came up the valley and a dense fog followed, but Jon assured us (and he was right) that it would lift about 11 o'clock, so we started early and went across the sands to the district near the Hofsjökull, at the base of which we marked off the road towards the S., following the course of the *Thjórsá* to *Eyvindarkofaver*. There we pitched our tent, near the ruins (which I had examined some years ago) of the miserable hut of an outlaw, Eyvind, who lived there about a hundred years ago.

After having carefully tied the horses legs, we let them loose in the boggy pastures, and went to bed, thinking there would be no danger here, as there was good grass. The last time I heard the horses grazing outside, was between 3 and 4 o'clock, just before dawn, so I was very much surprised when Jon came into the tent at 4,30 and awoke Sigurdur and myself saying: „The horses are gone“.

We jumped up and rushed out. It was somewhat misty, but we could see a good distance, although the sun had not yet risen. We looked, and looked, but the horses must have hidden themselves in a dip. We all went in a different direction to search for them, and soon afterwards I heard a cry in the distance: „They have gone towards the north, here is their track“. Suddenly I saw Jon and Sigurdur running across the hills following their track. Meanwhile I went up a hill to reconnoitre, but saw nothing. In about three hours, however the men returned with the horses at full speed having found the fugitives about 4 miles to the north. They were led by the grey pack-horse, and were making for home. The animals looked very sleepy and stupid, while we packed our things, and placed the burdens on their backs.

The fog lifted, the sun broke forth and a beautiful rain-

bow appeared in the sky just as we started southward along the *Thjórsá*, in the direction of *Hvannagil*, a pasture north of the *Búdarháls*.

We expected to have an easy ride, but were soon disappointed at having to encounter difficulties of the worst kind. First we had to contend with the soft sandy bed of a stream, and on crossing the *Thúfuverskvísl* later on, we had a narrow escape. The banks looked quite safe, and we never dreamed of danger. Jon went on to find a place where he could ford



A camping place at *Hvannagil*.

the river, and he began to cross it. The bed of the river was a little soft, but not so bad that we could not follow; he was just on the point of reaching the opposite bank, when both horse and rider almost disappeared. They tumbled about in the water for a few minutes, when Jon got up, but he could not pull the horse up; with distended nostrils it rolled about struggling in the quick-sand, and it was only after considerable exertion that Jon succeeded in getting it ashore.

For some time I looked about for a better place to cross the river, and finally found one, close to where it comes down over a basaltic rock, like a small waterfall.

Shortly afterwards we halted near *Thúfuver*, a fertile pasture, where the people from the south encamp when they go to the mountains for their sheep, and where they have constructed

a small sheepfold. We again continued our journey, passing by the *Sóleyjarhöfði* and heading towards the south along the *Thjórsá*. We had again to cross some streams with quicksand, so the horses were very tired, when we reached the pasture *Hvannagil* in the evening; here can be seen a beautiful waterfall in the *Thjórsá*.

The weather had been magnificent the whole day, and we had had a beautiful view of the glaciers. It was oppressively hot when the sun shone, and bitterly cold when it disappeared behind the clouds. I had exactly the same sensation as when I sat near the camp fires in Africa. One was too hot on the one side, and as cold as ice on the other. We



On the Sprengisandur.

pitched our tent near one of the many pools of stagnant water between mounds of sand covered with *Salix Glauca*. We felt cold in the tent, and could not sleep for fear of the horses escaping; at last I fell asleep, but was soon awakened, with the news that the horses had disappeared; it was then half past two, and pitch dark, but nevertheless they were found and brought back. The night passed without further disturbance, and after a good cup of coffee, we were alright again.

At sunrise we washed and dressed, near one of the pools; there was a coating of ice on it, and at the bottom, the impression of swan's feet was distinctly visible, and feathers were scattered about. We took advantage of the beautiful weather to arrange several things, such as shoeing the horses, repairing broken boxes etc. etc. We started on a little trip southward at 10-30, and thereby ascertained that the route could be continued

to the *Tungnaá* and that the *Klifshagavellir* lies much too far towards the east on the maps (a ride of 3—4 hours). During the whole ride we enjoyed the beautiful view of the *Hekla*, and the mountains in its vicinity. In the evening we returned to *Hvannagil*, as I dared not attempt to go further south on account of the cold, and the prospect of a snowstorm; the mountains were entirely covered with snow. We had therefore to be content with our reconnoitring along the *Kalda-kvísl*, in which there was much more water than usual.

We went so far east that we could see *Illugaver*, and the country south of *Vonarskard*, behind which the *Vatnajökull*'s white surface is seen.

Again that night the horses attempted to get away but were captured.

This would have been almost the worst place it could have happened; we were certainly not far from inhabited districts in the south part of the country (a ride of one day and a half) but we could not have crossed the *Tungnaá*, because the boats that the peasants use when they take their sheep to the mountains, were all on the north-side of the river.

It would have taken us three days to ride to the inhabited districts in the north. To cover this distance on foot would have taken us double the time, as we should have had to take provisions and a tent with us — so it was most fortunate that we recovered our horses.

On August 28th we began our journey northward, taking this time a route more to the east, and about one mile from the *Thjórsá*, thus avoiding the soft sandy tracts near the outlets of the streams. At the same time we marked off a good road. We reached the *Sóleyjarhöfði*, the ford across the *Thjórsá* generally used, and crossed without any obstacles, then we let the horses graze west of the river near a hut. We again proceeded northward so as to get to *Nauthagi* (a place close to the *Hofsjökull*) before sunset. Jon said that there were hot springs there, and luxuriant vegetation.

South of the *Hofsjökull* the beautiful light summits of the *Kerlingarfjöll* were seen in the distance, between which, gleamed the eternal snow. In the narrow valleys of the *Kerlingarfjöll* there are hundreds of hot springs, which I visited in 1897.

Following the *Blautakvísl*, we made a curve in a westerly direction, so as to avoid the various rivulets which come from the *Hofsjökull*; these unite, and form large rivers which empty

themselves into the Thjórsá. Later on we crossed the Blautakvísl at its broadest part, and made for a group of mountains on the border of the Hofsjökull.

About 6 o'clock in the evening we went round a little promontory, and were very much surprised to see a green plain abundant in vegetation, below the cold white glaciers. The vapour from a hot spring was seen rising up from the plain, and along the stream, flowing from the spring, vegetation was most luxuriant. Among other plants there were gigantic Angelica. The temperature of the spring was, at a rough estimate over 35° Celsius. But at a distance of less



Nauthagi.

than 100 feet from the place where the hot water ran into a tributary of the *Miklakvísl* (from the Jökull) the water is very cold, there being ice near the banks. We saw stickle-back swimming from the cold into the warm water.

The name *Nauthagi* is derived from Naut (young cattle). About 50 years ago, two heads of cattle ran away from Reykjavik and were found here.

Webfooted birds lived in this oasis. We saw a flock of timid swans at a distance in the meadow, while flocks of noisy geese flew backwards and forwards in the neighbourhood of our tent, curious to know what we were doing there.

After the sun had disappeared behind *Arnarfell id mikla* (at Hofsjökull), I heard the quacking of ducks in the stillness of the night, and when crossing the swamp to see to the

horses before going to rest, I roused a ptarmigan which gave them a fright.

After nightfall, the glacier loomed dark and threatening near us, but above it the atmosphere was clear and sparkling, and in the east, on the other side of the Thjórsá, we saw the Vatnajökull, with its two big characteristic promontories *Hágöngur*. At sunset, the *Hekla* was just visible when the sun shone on its snow-capped summit.

I hurried off to bed, after a bath at the hot springs. It was bitterly cold during the night, and when we came out of the tent at sunrise a keen wind was blowing from the glacier. As the sun rose it grew warmer, and we took our time, for we had much to repair before making a start, and besides there was no hurry, as we did not intend to go further than *Arnarfell id mikla*, a mountain $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours from here.

We rode along the base of the glacier, crossed the *Miklavíslir*, and later on all the *Múlavíslir* which come from a projecting corner of the glacier towards the south east. They pass through the mounds of gravel and sand which girth the glacier.

Here and there on the outer slope of these mounds, we saw some very old bridle-paths winding through beautiful grassy patches. Now and then curlews flew up from the ground, ptarmigans ran through the heather and willow with their full-grown young, or they rose, and flew a short distance from us. Sometimes we came across some deserted breeding places of swans, covered with feathers. We enjoyed looking at the snow-birds, or we chased the titlarks along the paths while they tried to hide themselves.

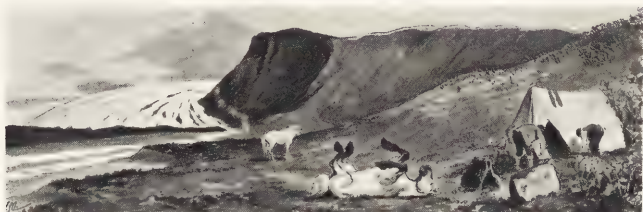
Across the milky water of the *Múlavíslir* we saw the moss-grown plains near the *Thjórsá*, and if we looked in the opposite direction towards the glacier, we could see the big dark mounds of gravel piled up in front of the cold, almost even surface of the glacier; all the *Múlavíslir* force their way through this mound. One of these rivulets had recently broken through a new place, and carried a quantity of gravel and mud down over the plain. This very often happens. The rivers frequently change their beds, and the maps can only state their names. All the *Múlavíslir* form, west of the little hill *Arnarfelldalda*, one river which empties itself into the *Thjórsá*. After the *Múlavíslir*, we crossed the *Arnarfelldvíslir* near *Arnarfell id mikla*.

At the foot of this beautiful mountain, we encamped on a

slope facing the south, abounding in grass, flowering plants, angelica the height of a man and various other plants.

This grass plot formed a strange contrast to the glacier, and the barren gravel and stony tracts in the neighbourhood.

Tempted by these comparatively fertile spots the previously mentioned outlaw Eyvind made his abode there. He had lived a long time at *Eyvindarkofaver*, but did not feel safe there, so he settled down with his wife at *Arnarfell*. The place where he lived is no longer known, being hidden in the gravel from the glacier. He spent one summer here, and seized the opportunity of stealing a number of lambs and sheep from the „Afrjettir“ (joint pastures), 80 of these he slaughtered for food in the winter, but the peasants discovered his hut and took possession of the stolen goods. Eyvind was



At Arnarfell id mikla.

obliged to give up living in the mountains, and had to resort to inhabited places.

The pasture near *Arnarfell id mikla* and probably that near *Nauthagi* have evidently been more frequented formerly than now.

At that time the road west of the Thjórsá was sometimes used. *J. C. Schiödde* for instance, slept one night at Nauthagi on his journey in 1840 to *Vonarskard* and further on via *Vatnajökulsvegur*. The road at that period was evidently at times worse than it is now, and one was even obliged to go up on the glacier. Only sixteen years ago a peasant had to do so, as he could not get on along the base owing to the softness of the soil. It was old *Gudmundur*, a well known guide of the *Sprengisandur*, but he was most unfortunate. He had five horses with him, and had taken the wrong road owing to the fog; one of the horses fell into a fissure of the glacier, which the snow had completely covered, he tried to pull it up with a rope, but as he did not succeed, he was obliged to kill it.

On August 30th we got up at 4,30, the sun rose about 6, and we were soon ready to start. We left this lovely place to proceed to the main route of the Sprengisandur, across the *Thjórsárkvíslir*. The first two hours we had to ride step by step across the stony plains, in front of the moraines; later on we rode towards the N. E. and crossed the largest of the *Thjórsárkvíslar*. Safe and sound we reached the main road, where a few days ago we had marked off the place where the road should diverge towards Arnarfell.

The road along the glacier had proved to be rather good, and there is no doubt that it will be advantageous, especially when one cannot reckon on crossing at the *Sóleyjarhöfði* on account of the swollen rivers.

In the mounds of gravel, N. of Arnarfell id mikla. I found



Hofsjökull seen from the Jökuldalur.

big pieces of obsidian evidently brought down by the ice from the remote parts of the Hofsjökull. They were strewn over large tracts. In a few places there was abundant vegetation. Snow-birds, and other small birds, as well as curlews were often seen. We went to the Jökuldalur and encamped for the night.

It had proved that the route leading across the Sprengisandur could easily be continued as well to *Rangárvalla-Sysla* (E. of the *Thjórsá*) as to *Arness-Sysla* (W. of same river) after the *Sóleyjarhöfði* is passed. The road along the Hofsjökull or the *Arnarfell* road had also proved to be good. Now we had only to find a more direct route to the interior of the *Eyjaffardardalur*. This was our task the last days we were in the highlands.

From the *Jökuldalur* we went S. of the *Fjordungsalda*, and towards the N. W. to the *Laugafell*, an isolated mountain N of the Hofsjökull. In fine weather it can be seen from all parts. None of us had ever visited these regions, which on the whole were very little known.

When we were to leave the Jökuldalur, it was most unfortunate, as this was the very day we were to find our way through districts unknown to us.

After a few hours ride the fog lifted and we went on towards the Laugafell, constantly ascending and crossing the tract of land with the *watershed between the tributaries of the Thjórsá, the Skjálfandi, and the Jökulsá Eystri* (to the Skagafjörður). After having crossed the main road, which is indicated by cairns, we crossed the *Bergvatnkvísl* or *Bergkvísl*, that joins the Thjórsá. We reached the mountains S. E. of the Laugafell, on the above mentioned watershed, after having traversed plains of gravel and sand. From here we had a beautiful view of the vast desert. The country S. of the Laugafell, and down to the Hofsjökull, is one of the most barren tracts in Iceland. We saw distinctly the most N. tributary of the Thjórsá flowing from the N. E. corner of the glacier, where a little conical shaped mountain *Litla Arnarfell* is to be seen, we saw the two arms of the river *Bergvatnkvísl*, one of them being only ten minutes ride from the *Laugakvísl*. We followed the *Laugakvísl*, ascended the *Laugalda* on horseback and enjoyed the beautiful and extensive view once more. In the W., we saw the *Mælifellshnjúkur*, in the S., the Hofsjökul, in the S. W. and W the Vatnajökull with the Hágöngur, the Tungnafellsjökull, in the E. the Ódádahraun with the *Dyngjufjöll*, the *Kistufell*, and the *Trölladyngja*; the horizon is obscured by the heights near *Kidagil* in the N. E., and the *Vatnahjalli* in the N.

We then descended the mountain to look for the hot springs, which, according to *Thoroddsen*, are in the vicinity of one of the tributaries of the *Laugakvísl*. After searching a short time we found the three hot springs, (Laugar 38°—40° C. of heat) emerging from a stream of cold water; along this brook there was a little vegetation, but we were rather disappointed at not finding sufficient grass for our horses for one night, so I determined to go on immediately.

Tradition says that as long as the plague lasted, there were mountain dairies near the Laugafell. There are said to be ruins from that time, which I looked for on my way, but failed to discover them. For the sake of the horses we were obliged to push on, so as to reach *Eystri Pollar* (two grassy swamps with small lakes and ponds) before nightfall. First we crossed a small river, and after a ride of 1½ hrs. from the hot springs, we reached the most southern swamp, where

we encamped in a dip, with little knolls covered by grass and *Salix Glauca*.

We were now on the so called *Vatnahjallavegur* (which connects the interior of the *Eyjafjardardalur* with the *Kjalvegur*) a pass very much used in olden days, although it was very long and stony. In 1897 I had surveyed a part of it towards the west as far as the *Jökuls á-eystri*. I had not travelled along the other part of the road myself, but had seen most of it at a distance. The late Mr. *F. R. Howell*, an Englishman, had given me some information about the route. Thor-oddson has described a part of it.

From *Eystri Pollar* the road leads in a N. direction over rather stony ground to Geldingsá (a pasture) from there it runs more to the N. (towards the *Vatnahjalli*) across very rocky ground, where the horses could hardly find foothold.

On September 1st after a very cold night, we began the last stage of our journey, and after having crossed very rocky tracts of land, we reached the *Ullarvötn*, some small lakes with barren surroundings. Here we rested, lunched, and prepared for the fatiguing ascent towards the mountain *Vatnahjalli*, whence we should descend into the valley. We had been informed that it would take us 4—5 hrs. to ride from the lakes down into the *Eyjafjardardalur*.

As it was fine weather I gave the horses the hay we had with us. My companions had wished to get rid of it several times, but I thought we ought to keep it, as there was no knowing what might happen. After luncheon, while the horses were being saddled, I went on in advance, as I often did. While ascending the very rocky side of the mountain, I saw clouds of fog drifting up to the plateau, evidently from the *Eyjafjardardalur*. I now waited for the horses. The fog grew more and more dense, and before we had reached the border of the valley, we were in total darkness. We had to dismount and grope our way; sometimes the cairns helped us to find the right direction, but misled us when they were not in the right places. We kept all the horses together, and as soon as we had found a cairn, I sent a man on to look for the next one and when we heard his call we followed him. In this way we proceeded for some time, but at last we could find no more cairns, and had to go on at hap-hazard. We felt however, that we were descending, and we heard the sound of water rushing through a ravine. We followed the brink of the ravine, and after groping about for a few hours, we reached the slope of a mountain, where the fog began

to lift. We saw at our feet a lovely green valley, in which the sun was shining, and where horses were grazing. At a little distance, we saw a cluster of houses, which proved to be the farm that lies furthest up the Eyjafjardardalur. After a halt on the slope, where the horses got a good feed, we went down into the valley by a very difficult path. Here we saw the haymakers in the meadows, and to us, coming from the uninhabited parts of the country, it was a most beautiful sight. Sigurdur rode up to them, and asked where we could pass the night.

They stared at him.

„Where do you come from?“

„From the Sprengisandur.“

„The Sprengisandur?“

„Yes certainly.“

„But how did you find your way across the mountains in that fog?“ they asked looking amazed.

Soon after we were safe and sound at the farm *Tjarnir*.

A MODERN SAGA.

This story deals with a young Icclander's wonderful adventures in the uninhabited districts of the interior of his native country. It is a modern Saga, in which courage, perseverance and energy are depicted.

The hero of this Saga, is *Kristinn Jonsson* a labourer at *Tjarnir*, where I met him. I had heard about him, and expected to see a man full of physical strength and energy, and was therefore very astonished to see a sickly looking young man enter the room. He was a cripple, and walked with a stick. I chatted with him for some time, and at my request, he told me his adventures, which I shall endeavour to relate here.

In the month of September, people from the valleys go up to the mountains a second time to fetch their sheep.

Early in the morning, (September 27th 1898), *Kristinn Jonsson*, together with two other men left *Tjarnir*, intending to return in



Kristinn Jonsson.

the evening, so they took neither food nor warm coats with them. They left their horses on the plateau, south east of the valley, and proceeded in different directions to look for the sheep. They were soon overtaken by a dense fog, and were compelled to turn back, but Kristinn mistook the road, and went towards the south east, instead of going in the direction of Tjarnir. He came to a river, (the Bergkvísl) when he at once knew that he had lost his way, for had he been on the right track, he would not have encountered a stream. After having weighed the matter over, he decided to follow the course of the river, feeling sure that it would lead him to inhabited places. It was still foggy, but not very dark, and Kristinn hurried on without stopping to rest. He was hungry, but as he had no food, he drank of the water in the river.

Early next morning he arrived at the junction of another river, (the Thjórsá's most northern tributary) with the first river; hoping soon to reach inhabited districts, he waded across and continued following the river. It was still damp and foggy, and as it was growing dark, and Kristinn was very tired, after having walked 36 hours, he lay down to rest, in the shelter of a big rock.

He thought of those at home, and how anxious they must be, and, praying to God soon to lead him to a Býgd, he fell asleep. The night was very cold, although it was not freezing.

When Kristinn awoke, the fog had disappeared, and the sun was shining. He saw to his astonishment, that he was close to a glacier, which however he did not know was the Hofsjökull, but he was convinced that he had not gone in the direction of the Skagafjörður, but towards the south. Knowing that he could not find his way back to Tjarnir, he continued his course along the river, quite certain of its leading to human habitations — but he had no idea that they were so distant. He was conscious of the danger of being quite alone in the mountains, with the prospect of spending several days there, without food and with nothing to protect him from the cold. But Kristinn did not despair; he prayed to God, and plodded bravely on.

Late in the evening he reached the south end of the glacier; he was so fatigued, that he lay down in the sand to sleep, although the weather was very cold. He awoke, after a short sleep, and dragged himself along; he was getting weaker and weaker, but never felt hungry, though he suffered so much from thirst that he had constantly to drink water.

In the evening of the fourth day, after a most fatiguing

walk in damp, cold weather, he came to the junction of the main river with a stream which did not come from the glacier. No shelter was to be found, so he slept at the foot of a hill near the river, exposed to the cold.

He wore a cap, but no comforter, a coat, the collar of which he turned up at night, and shoes made of hide. Fortunately he had on two pairs of stockings, for his shoes were so worn, that they afforded hardly any protection to his feet.

He came across horse tracks, which led him to believe that he would soon meet people, but the peasants had already driven their sheep down from the mountains, so there was no likelihood of his meeting them.

On the fifth day when he awoke, he was seized with an indescribable longing to be among human beings again, and he cried out; „Haa — aa — aa“, as the peasants do when they call their sheep. But he got no reply — not a living thing was to be seen in this silent desert, surrounded by ice. A feeling of loneliness crept over Kristinn, but nothing seemed to daunt his courage; he prayed, and walked on dauntlessly, suffering physically and mentally, never losing sight of the beautiful Thjórsá, which he knew must lead him to a Bygd.

Broken down by incessant walking, wet and shivering, on he went. He suffered from thirst, but was not hungry, although he had not tasted food for so many days.

That night he discovered a hut, used by the peasants when they collect their sheep, and here he rested. It was freezing, and Kristinn felt his feet getting colder and colder. The following day he had no feeling in them, and his hands were blue with chilblains.

The weather was bright and frosty, and Kristinn proceeded with incredible energy along the sparkling river that raised his hopes, and seemed to spur him on. A grand snow-capped mountain (the Hekla) gleamed in the sunshine, on the opposite bank of the river. In front of him, but far ahead, was a smaller mountain, (the Búrfell) which he made for, crossing grassy plains and feeling convinced that he was at last near some inhabited place — but alas, too late perhaps! His feet were not painful, but very swollen, and he was obliged to rest every moment, as he felt so weak, that he thought he must die.

That night he hardly slept, for there was a keen wind which made him shiver, and he kept wondering if it would be possible to proceed further next-day. Then he thought of his

mother, and how grieved she would be to hear that he had disappeared, and had probably perished in the mountains. His only thought now was to meet with people who would tell her what had become of him, and who would bury him.

On the seventh day, with the greatest difficulty, he reached a little wood, near the Búrfell. It was quite impossible for him to go any further. Believing that death was approaching, and hoping to be happy in the next world, he fell asleep under a bush.

Next morning, (Oct. 4th. the 8th day), he awoke and tried to go on once more, but in vain, he fell down, and lay for some hours, in a state of lethargy. The instinct of selfpreservation roused him however; he arose and looked around; the sight that met his eyes gave him hope, for some horses were grazing just outside the wood. He tried to reach the horses, but could not move his feet, and as he saw no one, he decided to lie down and wait, but all of a sudden a man appeared, only a few paces off, who turned out to be *Eiríkur Olafsson*, from a farm in the neighbourhood. He advanced towards Kristinn saying: „Komdu sæll“ (be greeted), and then he asked him who he was, and whence he had come.

Kristinn told him how he had lost his way, and that he did not know where he was. Eiríkur clasped his hands and told him, he was in Árnes-Sysla. Eiríkur offered Kristinn something to eat, but strange enough, he had lost all inclination for food, and only took a small piece of meat. He no longer felt sleepy, the joy of being with his fellow-creatures kept him awake. The horses were quickly saddled; Kristinn was able to mount one, Eiríkur's boy riding on the one side and Eiríkur himself on the other, so as to support him.

After a ride of three hours they came to the farm Aslakstadir, where Kristinn was put to bed; as soon as he began to get warm, he felt the most dreadful pains in his feet and legs. First one doctor was fetched, then another, but they could do nothing; mortification had set in. Kristinn was ill three weeks, then he was taken further south on a stretcher, between two horses, and driven to Reykjavik, where all his toes were amputated.

People were most enthusiastic about the young man's courage and perseverance, and helped him in every way.

After some time, he was well enough to proceed home, where he was received with open arms. They had searched for him in the mountains several times, but had at last given up all hope of seeing him again.

numerous old bridle paths), passing $\frac{1}{2}$ hour from Galtará, Lambamannastein where travellers in olden days placed stones, and 10 min. later reaching the most westerly of *Vékels-haugar*. Pasturage and Sæluhús here. The most easterly of Vékelshaugar lies a little to the N.E. Shortly after Haugakvísl, a tributary of Blanda, is crossed, then Lækjarbrot, (also tributary of Blanda), — now and again many old bridle paths — along the lake *Mannabeinavatn*, then over a stream (branch of Strangakvísl) shortly after reaching *Strangakvísl*, 800 to 1000 feet broad. Pasturage on south bank (2 hours from Galtará, 8 from Gilhagi). (page 30).

Haugahaun	lies between	Galtará	and	Haugakvísl.
Ásgeirstunga	—	—	Haugakvísl	— Strangakvísl.
Gudlaugstungur	—	—	Strangakvísl	— Svartárvísl.
Svartártunga	—	—	Svartárvísl	— Blanda.

From Strangakvísl ride in a slight curve towards Blanda, keeping first more to the west on Langjökull and Hrótafell, later south on Dúfufell, before and under which lies Rjúpnafell, — Blanda lies about 500 yards to the right — crossing Herjadalslækur — an old hut from the time of the sheep pest in 1860—61, — to Svartárvísl, which in spite of its name is fed by glacier water, although formerly it was a mountain stream. ($1\frac{1}{4}$ hours from Strangakvísl). In front at an angle to the right is seen an isolated hill, this is Sandkúlufell on Kúluheidi north west of Rjúpnafell. *Blanda is reached $\frac{1}{2}$ hour from Svartárvísl; $1\frac{3}{4}$ from Strangakvísl; $9\frac{3}{4}$ hours from Gilhagi.* The ford lies above the point where Seydisá joins Blanda, and is from 300 to 400 feet wide. It is rather changeable, the bottom being tolerably good. Steer towards a low steep slope up which the horses must be dragged. (page 30). From Blanda ride along Seydisá to the right (many old bridle paths) for 20 minutes to *Biskupsthúfa*, quite a small knoll only a few feet high which cannot be seen at any distance. Close by is a separating pen for sheep and grazing place.

Continue along Seydisá for 1 hr. in all, then $\frac{1}{4}$ hour south to Rjúpnafell. From here view to S over Kjalhraun and the mountains around it. (page 32). In the west (on right) is seen the vapour from Hveravellir, from which a stream (Hveralækur) runs to Seydisá. *Hveravellir* lies $\frac{3}{4}$ hrs. from Rjúpnafell, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ from the Ford over Blanda, and $11\frac{1}{2}$ to 12 hours from Gilhagi. *Stoppages not included.*

In the reverse direction Mælifellshnjúkur forms a good landmark. On the first part of the way from Blanda Ford steer north west with Mælifell on the right, after first ascending the slopes east of Blanda at Galtará Drag. The route from here to Adalmannsvötn is easily found, after which ride N. E. with Mælifellshnjuk to the left.

It may be noted that Gilhagi need not necessarily form the starting point for tours over Kjölur from Skagafjörð. The journey may also be commenced from *Mælifell* or from *Svartárdalur* but in all cases Adalmannsvötn must first be made for, after which the same route is followed as described above.

B. ROUTE OVER KJÖLUR FROM THE HÚNAVATNS SYSLA.

Starting point the farm *Stóridalur*. (The nearest coast station is Blönduós). Ride S by E along the west side of Blanda, in practically flat country the whole day. Our landmark is Rjúpnafell (Dúfufell). Blanda lies a little to the left. On the way we pass first Gilsá a little river or brook from Gilsvatn; one hour later a lake on the right named Fridmundarvötn. Mjófavatn, marked on the maps, is not seen. Thrístikla, a lake, lies close on the right. Later Sandá is crossed and finally Seydisá. All three rivers come from the west and fall into Blanda. As soon as Seydisá is crossed the grazing place at *Biskupsthúfa* is reached. From here to Hveravellir etc.

From Stóridalur to Hveravellir is one days ride.

In the *reverse direction* exactly the same route is followed along the west side of Blanda, choosing a break between two mountains as a landmark. The mountain to the right having the appearance of a ridge running from Mælifellshnjúkur. Gilsvatn is kept on the left, Blanda on the right.

C. 1. VATNAHJALLAVEGUR FROM EYJAFJARDAR- DALUR TO THE KJÖLUR. (Plate III and IV).

A short distance south of the innermost farm in Eyjafjardardalur, *Tjarnir*, we ascend the hill Vatnahjalli on the west side of the valley, the route being marked by cairns, (about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to crest). The little hill Hjallahnúkur on the top of Vatnahjalli lies to the left. At the western extremity of the hill is seen a lake close in front, and two others a

little farther off in the same direction. This is Ullarvötn. The way passes south of the nearest lake, and then more west and south west along the below named stony and difficult road to *Eystri Pollar* (5 hours from *Tjarnir*), (Route O) Pasture here. A little stream which we follow, on either bank, runs west here to Jökulsá Eystri, only a very short distance.

The crossing over Jökulsá is generally bad. After crossing keep on mainly S. W. first among small hills. (Laugafell is seen at an angle behind, and Hofsjökull to the left in the south). After $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours ride from Jökulsá *Vestri Pollar* grazing place is reached, lying on the right of the route. On the left, close up to Hofsjökull, a row of small summits is seen, Illvidrahnjúkar. The view is as usual boundless. A small brook Bleikálukvísl is crossed. It is often dry. Then come hills again, with two small eminences on the left. Hraunthúfukvísl, which comes from the lake Ásbjarnarvatn on the left and runs to Klaustur in Eystridalur, is crossed. Close by the south west end of the lake lies a little hill on the left. Then follow small eminences to Lambahraun a lava field on the left, with a fair sized hill Ásbjarnarfell close by on the same side. A little farther on, i. e. to the west, at the south end of the lava field lies Sáta, a little hill resembling a hay rick, on the boundary of Hofsjökull. The northern end of the lava field is passed at a narrow spot. After nearly an hours ride S. W. comes Eystri Kvísl (the east branch) of Jökulsá Vestri, and again an hour later Vestri Kvísl (the west fork) of same. West of the last named river scattered small hills and eminences are again met, then the so called Eyfirdingahólar (on left). Sáta is seen due south from here (to the left). Now bear a little north for Rjúpnafell (Dúfufell) on the north end of Kjalhraun, passing down the south end of a slope, Fossabrekka, along which runs Haugakvísl. Cross this and we are now $\frac{3}{4}$ hour from *Strangakvísl*, which comes from the vicinity of Sáta and runs into Blanda. From here the route passes as described in A.

Tjarnir—Vestri Pollar 7 hours
Vestri Pollar—Hveravellir 11 „

Taken in the *reverse direction* from S. W. to N. E. the starting point is Kjalvegur. Blanda is crossed at the Ford before described, just east of the junction of Seydisá. From here use as a landmark the hill Sáta, crossing several small tributaries of Blanda. On approaching Sáta a considerable gravel bank is perceived, stretching out westwards from it.

Ride due N. E. passing close by the foot of this bank. A small river runs along its lower side. From here the course is due N. E. where Illvidrahnjúkar*) soon is discerned. (In clear weather it may already be visible from Rjúpnafell on Kjalvegur). The course is north of this and passes at no great distance from the glacier itself. Here Jökulsá Vestri, which is not very deep, is crossed. Over the whole of this distance the route is fairly good and passable, but the soil is completely barren and bare. From Ásbjarnarfell do not bear too much to the north to reach *Vestri Pollar*.

When Mr. Fr. Howell in 1898 traversed Vatnahjallavegur he went from Ásbjarnarfell too much to the N. E. and after a long ride came to a river where there was *pasturage*, and where he spent the night. It was discovered later that this river had its source at *Vestri Pollar*. It took him 10 hours slow riding from *Hveravellir* to this spot. Jökulsá Vestri lay about midway between the two above mentioned points. According to Mr. Howell the distance between the two Jökulsá is shown on the maps of this district as much too short, while the distance from Jökulsá down to Eyjafjörður is shown too great. The writer can confirm the latter fact, and on the accompanying map (Plate II) this discrepancy is partially rectified, but the map of this district will not be good until accurate surveys are made.

The next day he continued N. E. passing the northern brow of a mountain, and after 2 hours ride reached Jökulsá Eystri at a spot where it lay between high rock walls. They were then probably some 4 miles north of the proper route. S. E. of the above named mountain brow lay a large lake. Mr. Howell says they should have passed to the south side of the mountain brow and lake, and then first struck the river where it forks. At this point there was a ford over the river, which was marked on both banks with cairns. Several other places on the way were marked with *cairns*, but as he is shown to have held too much to the north, these must be considered as *misleading*. A short distance east of the ford lay *Eystri Pollar* and the route from here is as described below over the waste (Öræfi) to the N. E., afterwards passing south of Ullarvötn (see under Sprengisandur, Route O). Five and a half hours to *Tjarnir* over a fearfully bad road from *Eystri Pollar*.

Vatnahjalli can be seen from Ásbjarnarfell, like a round

* Ásbjarnarfell is the most westerly of the different hills, named Illvidrahnjúkar.

little farther off in the same direction. This is Ullarvötn. The way passes south of the nearest lake, and then more west and south west along the below named stony and difficult road to *Eystri Pollar* (5 hours from *Tjarnir*), (Route O) Pasture here. A little stream which we follow, on either bank, runs west here to Jökulsá Eystri, only a very short distance.

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Vatnahjalli can be seen from Ásbjarnarfell, like a round

* Ásbjarnarfell is the most westerly of the different hills, named Illvidrahnjúkar.

mountain summit, somewhat larger than the other hills that lie to the E. and NE.

From Ásbjarnarfell a rocky valley can also be seen which appears to lie N. W. and S. E., but the route is not towards this, but E. N. E.

D. ROUTE OVER NÝJABÆJARFJALL.

Another mountain road, now no longer used, connects Eystridalur in the innermost extremities of Skagafjörður and Eyjafjörður valleys. From the district south of the farm Ábær a very stony and bad ascent rises over Nyjabæjarfjall in a north easterly direction, and over the waste uplands in the direction of *Villingadalur*. There is no grass for the horses on this route.

E. HVERAVELLIR TO HVÍTÁRNES.

There is a choice of two routes, either equally easy to follow (page 32).

1. *East of Kjalhraun*. The shortest and most generally used. Starting from Hveravellir in a curve round the Hraun to Dúfufell (1 hour), thence across the Hraun to east side of Kjalfell (1 hour), and so S. to *Gránanes*, which lies in the fork of the two tributaries which form Svartá (1 hour). The westerly of these tributaries rises in Kjalfell, one can therefore follow its course to Gránanes, where there is good pasturage (page 37, 40—41). From Gránanes the course is S. W. towards *Hvítárnes* (the tongue between Hvítá and Jökulkvísl).

The two mountain ridges *Skútar* are passed one after the other (to the west), between them by Svartá lies the grazing place *Svartárbugar* and a hut. Reaching Hvítárnes the river *Hvítá* is crossed by boats, if they are in order, and one of them is to be found on the north bank; otherwise *Skagfirdingavad* (Ford) must be attempted as described page 49.

Hveravellir—Hvítárnes 7—8 hours.

2. *West of Kjalhraun* in the hollow between the Hraun and Langjökulls Foothills (the so-called Thjófadalsfjöll), where there is a small water course. After 2 hours ride from Hveravellir we reach *Thjófadalur*, a valley which stretches in to the right between the foothills of Langjökull, among which Thjófahnjúkur is the most conspicuous. There is pasturage in the valley; it is a little off the route but may be reached by crossing a low ridge before reaching the valley mouth, or through this.

From Langjökull comes the glacier river Fúlakvísl, which runs along the foot of the beautiful Hrótafell with its three glaciers, down towards Hvítárvatn, and the route follows the river southwest to this lake; or the Kjalvegur main route above described may be followed south from Gránanes.

This route west of Kjalhraun is somewhat longer than that described above east of same, but it is exceptionally interesting and should absolutely be chosen by the tourist. Passing Hrótafell its three glaciers seem to hang over ones head on the one side, while on the other lies Kjalhraun with the great crater Strýtur.

Hveravellir—Hvítárnes 8—9 hours.

The district between Gránanes and Hvítárnes is called *Biskupstúnga Afriettir*.

Pasturage at Biskupsthúfa, Hveravellir, Thjófadalur, Gránanes, Svartárbugar and the north east side of Hvítárvatn.

F. GRÁNANES—KERLINGARFJÖLL.

From Gránanes ride in a curve towards the centre part of Kerlingarfjöll, where the hot springs are located. Immediately after crossing the east fork of Svartá ride N. E. later on E. over hilly and stony country, keeping well to the course. Two eminences are crossed, later Blákvísl; then bear a shade to the S. E. towards a small isolated hill, passing east of same, and from here steer straight for middle of Kerlingarfjöll, where the vapour from the hot springs can be seen. We now traverse a little hilly district just north of Jökulsá. The river may be swollen and a crossing not without danger. Cross below the hill and immediately after ride over a small ridge, leading into a dale through which Áskardsá flows out to Jökulsá. There is a poor grazing place here and a little hut. An hours ride up the cleft along Áskardsá brings us to the hot springs.

Gránanes—Áskardsá 3 hours.

Kerlingarfjöll can also be reached from the south without passing either Hvítá or Jökulkvísl. In this case the tour starts from *Hruni* or *Tungufell* in Hrunamannahrepp, riding N. E. to *Svínárnes* grazing place, and from there N. E. to a pasturage south of Kerlingarfjöll at *Leppistungur* where there is a *Sæluhús*.

G. HVÍTÁRNES—GULLFOSS—GEYSIR (page 5).

From *Skagfirdingavag* follow Hvítá southward, but to begin with at some distance from it along the foot of Bláfell

(One may also go west of Bláfell over its neck), where the country is somewhat marshy, later Hvítá may be re-approached following it all the way to *Gullfoss* and then going west to *Haukadal* and *Geysir* over *Tungufljót*, which is now spanned by a wooden bridge — or a more direct route without going to *Gullfoss* may be chosen straight to *Haukadal Geysir*, also passing over *Tungufljót*.

Skagfirðingavagð—Geysir about 10 hours.

H. FROM HVÍTÁRNES TO TUNGUFELL (page 8—9).

If *Hrunamannahreppur* is to be visited, we must cross from *Hvítárnes* over *Jökulkvísl* by a ford near where the river joins *Hvítá*. Continue along east side of *Hvítá*, not too close to the river, but so that it now and again is in sight. The country is now deserted here, but in olden days there lay a whole settlement here in *Hrunamanna-Afrjettir*. Here and there are ruins of long since deserted farms now lying waste. *Grjótá* is passed; then comes a tract of country covered with sand, stones, and mud, through which stream, and river beds cut their way; and after crossing *Sandá Svínárnes* is reached lying in the fork of *Svíná* and *Sandá*. Pasturage and a hut here. Now follows *Hardivöllur* a very rough stone plain, and then the deserted farms diminish in number in the undulating landscape where here and there willow is seen. Opposite *Gullfoss* lie the ruins of the farm *Hamarsholt*, and now we approach the farm *Tungufell* through a birch spinny in a hollow, after first having passed a distant sheep pen belonging to the farm. This is the first farm east of *Hvítá*. From here to *Hruni* parsonage, when we are again in inhabited parts.

Hvítárnes—Tungufell ca. 8 hours.

Beside the already named pasturages in *Hrunamanna-Afrjettir* at *Leppitungur* and *Svínárnes*, and at *Áskárdsá* in *Kerlingarfjöll*, there are also grazing places at *Fosslækur* south of *Svínárnes*, and at *Búðará* north of *Tungufell*.



A SKETCH OF THE ROUTES

TO AND FROM

THE SPRENGISANDUR. (Plate I, II and IV).

The *watershed* between the glacier-rivers flowing N and those to the S. is often very narrow, and the sources are sometimes very close together. We discovered for instance that there was only a short ride of ten minutes between one of the sources (the *Bergkvísl*) of the Thjórsá, and one of the sources (the *Hnjúskvísl*) of the *Jökulsá Eystri*, which empties itself in the *Skagafjörður*.

The surface of the highland between the Jökulls, consists of diluvial and alluvial formations, and on the sand there is often a mosaic-like layer of small and large stones.

Other places, especially where the mountains in the process of time have been reduced to stones, which cover extensive tracts, it is almost impossible to travel on horseback, on account of the great quantity of stones and their sharp edges.

In the district in question, the Sprengisandur, in a more restricted sense, gravel stones and sand are predominant. Vegetation is very scanty, and consists of the most hardy mountain plants, and here and there a few, almost stiff blades of grass. Large patches looking like oases, and covered with a carpet of grass etc. etc. are to be met with, but only at long intervals.

The lack of pasturage for the horses is the most serious obstacle for those who wish to traverse the Sprengisandur, and to this must be added the dangerous crossing of the Jökulrivers (glacier-rivers). These however need not be dreaded, as they can partly be avoided, and partly forded in places where the ground is not so bad; or crossed in boats.

No dangerous river comes from the Tungnafellsjökull; from the Vatnajökull, or rather the Vonarskard flows the *Kaldakvísl*; it joins the *Tungnaá*, which is crossed in boats near the *Búðarháls*. The rivers from the Hofsjökull are therefore those which render the crossing of the Sprengisandur difficult.

On the S. E., E, and N. E. side of this Jökull a whole net of glacier-rivers rise, which are crossed one by one, before they form a junction, and the obstacles they present can be surmounted with good horses. When these rivulets unite and form the *Thjórsá*, this river becomes a tremendous stream, which as a rule can only be crossed at a certain

place in Sóleyjarhöfði, where it is stony and consequently fordable.

If however the state of the rivers is unusually bad, as is often the case in hot summers, and after *Jökulhlaup* (torrents) one cannot cross at *Sóleyjarhöfði*, attempt must be made to proceed along the border of the Hofsjökull and cross each stream separately.

By looking at the map, which is not drawn according to measurements, but from a sketch, one will easily understand the different river systems in connection with the Sprengisandur. It must be mentioned that this map is based on Thoroddsen's, but the distance between the Hofsjökull and the Tungnafellsjökull appears to be too short.

Stefán Stefánsson, a botanist, and member of the Althing has given me most interesting information concerning the vegetation of the Sprengisandur which I regret not to be able to publish here. *)

J. THE MAIN ROUTE OVER THE SPRENGISANDUR

begins at Sudur-Thingeyjarsýsla and from Bárdardalur's most southern farm, Mýri. It leads in a S. W. direction over the sands to the *Sóleyjarhöfði* (a ford) where the road branches off, in two directions, one E. of the Thjórsá, the other W. of the same river.

From Mýri, one rides S. to the Íshóllsvatn $1\frac{1}{4}$ hrs. good pasturage at S. end of the lake, near the ruins of the farm Íshóll.

From *Íshóll* to the W. over the mountain, down into the Mjófidalur, and through this valley to the S. W. to the pasture *Fremri- or Ytri-Mosar*, 2 hrs. In the same direction to another good pasture *Innri-Mosar* $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. From here in the same direction following the course of the river up to the barren rocky plateau, towards Kidagilshnjúkur keeping W. of it, 2 hrs.

Kidagil's ravine is crossed about 2 miles W. of the junction of the *Kidagilsá* with the Skjálfandi, and the road continues to the S. W. (The ravine cannot be passed until its opening near the Skjálfandi is reached).

Should one desire to stop at one of the pastures near *Kidagil*, which are not very good, the main road must be left, and an E. direction taken, either to a spot N. of the ravine, or to *Áfangatorfur* S. of same, in either case $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour's ride.

*) „Geografisk Tidsskrift“ 1901–1902, *Daniel Bruun*: Sprengisandur.

A pasture a little S. of Áfangatorfur, can also be used: *Fljótsdalur* near the „Fljót“ viz Skjálfandafljót (Skjálfandi = trembling one) but they are all bad.

From the W. part of Kidagil, where the main road cuts the ravine, the route leads on towards the S. W. Here the *Sprengisandur* proper begins, and extends as far S. as *Eyvindarkofaver*. The route is continued on the W. side of a large elongated hill, the *Fjórðungsalda*. A little moss and grass (for sheep) is to be found in the dips. First the road lies along one of the tributaries of the Kidagilsá, and crosses later on Kidagilsdrag, and Hældrag, then along Kvíslarbotnar, Klyfberadrag, all dips, where water sometimes collects, whence it flows in an E. direction to the „Fljót“; now ascent is made on the sand plains.

For some time the N. E. corner of the Hofsjökull has been faintly seen; now it is quite distinct. The Tungnafellsjökull and the N. W. corner of the Vatnajökull can also be seen.

The road still leads towards the S. W. along the Fjórðungsvatn (an elongated lake) due W. of the Fjórðungsalda, which dries up sometimes in summer.

Kidagil—Fjórðungsalda 3 hrs. Along the Fjórðungsvatn 1 hour.

The direction is now S. W. (from the S. end of the Fjórðungsvatn, the side road branches off to the Jökuldalur in the S. E., 3 hrs.) over the watershed, between the N. and S. The sand plains soon incline towards the S. The Thjórsá cannot be seen. The Hofsjökull lies to the right, the Tungnafellsjökull in front to the left. The Fjórðungakvísl (kvísl — rivulet) which comes from the Tungnafellsjökull, is crossed, which is very bad in Spring.

Fjórðungsalda—Fjórðungakvísl 2–3 hrs. (Half an hour later the Arnarfell's Road branches off towards the W. over the Thjórsá; cairns indicate the place) Hafurmýri-Drag and -Kvísl are crossed. (The side road to the Jökuldalur, branches off here for people coming from the S.). Arnarfell id mikla due W. Here the Thjórsá is visible. The Hreysikvísl is crossed.

Fjórðungakvísl—Hreysikvísl 4 hrs. Hreysikvísl—Eyvindarkofaver ³/₄ hr.

Eyindarver or *-kofaver* is a great swampy lowland covered with grass, looking like a bay formed by the Thjórsárdalur, splendid pastures.

Tents are pitched to the S. in the bogs near the ruins of

Eyvinds Kofi (kofi = hut). From Eyvindarver to the S. W. along the Thjórská to Sóleyjarhöfði.

Immediately after leaving Eyvindarver the road lies across the Eyvindarkvísl, the bed of which is rather soft, then to the W. by the Sandvatn, a small lake, and immediately after to the E. by the Eyvindarvatn, a somewhat larger lake. Then along the east side of a large grass grown dip, the so called *Thúfu-ver*, the borders of which are marshy and dangerous. The Thúfuverkvísl flows from the E. through the bog to the Thjórská. One must beware of the Thúfuverkvísl on account of its swampy banks. One proceeds towards the E. along the river until a little waterfall is reached, which comes down over basaltic rocky ground. The crossing is safest, over the very rocky place just above the waterfall. Shortly afterwards one arrives at a *place for tents*, where there is a sheepfold, which the people from Rangárvalla Sysla use in the autumn when they go to the mountains to collect the sheep. Grass and *Salix Glauca* grow here. In half an hour one arrives at the *Sóleyjarhöfði*, an elongated hill along the Thjórská.

Eyvindarver—Sóleyjarhöfði 2 hrs.

To the S. of the *Sóleyjarhöfði* is a *ford*, the only one across the Thjórská until the inhabited districts in the S. are reached.

From the E. bank, head is made for a little island, and from there to the W. bank. The route is indicated by cairns at all three places. The bed of the Thjórská is stony. The most E. tributary is the narrowest and deepest. In spring when the snow melts, and also, when it is very hot, one cannot cross the ford. *W. of ford, grass and Kofi.*

If the Sprengisandur is to be traversed in the opposite direction, the traveller advances along the E. side of the Thjórská between the Hofss- and the Tungnafellsjökull. Between the Jökulls, the Fjórðungsalda appears like a flat hill rising above the table land. The route is, as heard, on the W. side of it. From the Fjórðungsalda to the N. E. towards Kidagil, and then straight ahead.

K. THE ROAD W. OF THE THJÓRSÁ TO ARNESS-SYSLA,

from the *Sóleyjarhöfði*, runs S. W. along the river Thjórská.

The following rivers must be crossed: the Knifá, which is sometimes difficult (1 hr.); the Kisá (from the Kerlingarfjöll) with glacier water, hence the bed of the river is soft and unsafe, (2 hrs.) the Miklilækur, ($\frac{1}{2}$ an hour); the tract

of land between this river and the Kisá is called *Kjálkaver*, *pasturage*; — the Dalsá (1½ hrs.) the tract of land from the Miklilækur to the Dalsá is called *Lodnaver*, *good pasturage*.

From the Sóleyjarhöfði to the Dalsá (5 hrs.).

From the Dalsá, the road leads on to the Geldingsá (1½ hrs.), then to Gljúfurá (1½ hrs.), to the Blautakvísl (1½ hrs., the tract between them, Starkadsver) — Upper Skúmsbungnaá (1½ hrs.), Lower Skúmsbungnaá (1 hr.) the tract between them is called *Skúmsbungur* — *Kofi and good pasturage*.

Dalsá—Skúmsbungur 7 hrs.

Here the road runs to the S. W. from the Thjórská over the hill, Sandfell, to Raudá (1 hr.) then past a ravine with a waterfall, grass and a sheepfold (1 hr.). Then comes the Fossá (½ hr.) and now one is in the *Thjórskárdalur*, where there are ruins of many farms. This is „Iceland's Pompeii“, on account of the 14—16 ruins of farms lying half or completely covered by lava, pumice-stone and ashes, which were destroyed by volcanic eruption. Step by step the horses work their way through the loose ashes after the last inhabited farm and birch-thicket has been left behind. The valley bottom is black and dark, and also the hills are dark; only in the middle of the valley does a bright red hill show itself, which glows in the sun, as if it was still ablaze as on the day when the subterranean fire broke forth and melted the hill. The steam from the hot springs ascends from its foot and a number of small craters are to be seen on the plain. We think with horror of the awful scenes which have taken place here, when, as tradition says, the sky was obscured by the rain of ashes, whilst the lava streamed out and destroyed the prosperity and fruitfulness which had hitherto provided the existence of the farms. Now everything has disappeared; the grass will grow no more here and human beings are shut out for ever from this valley, where generation after generation lived and shared their pleasures and sorrows. Gauk Trandilssons farm now lies in ruins, and the neighbouring farm is sunk in rubbish. Here lived his lover, for whose sake he was murdered by his foster-brother.

The Sandá is passed. To the W. of the stream, wooded slopes, after ½ an hours ride the traveller arrives at the farm *Skridufell* and here the journey ends.

Skúmsbungur—Skridufell (4 hrs.).

L. THE ROAD E. OF THE THJÓRSÁ TO RANGÁRVALLA-SYSLA.

From the Sóleyjarhöfði to the Tungnaá (2 days). The road leads across sands similar to those of the Sprengisandur, perhaps a little more hilly.

The traveller rides along the E. side of the Thjórsá, keeping about 1 mile from the river at first, in order to avoid the swampy banks of various small streams. After a ride of $3\frac{1}{2}$ hrs., the traveller approaches the banks of the river and arrives after $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. ride, at a good pasture *Hvannagil*; a little further N. there is another grass plot, close to the Thjórsá. The place is easily found, as the Thjórsá forms here a beautiful waterfall, between rocks and islands. The waterfall is called either the *Hvannagil Foss* (*foss* = waterfall) or the *Kjálkaver Foss* (the smoke is seen in distance) after *Kjálkaver* which is opposite to it.

From the Sóleyjarhöfði—*Hvannagil* 4 hrs.

From *Hvannagil* towards the S. leaving the banks of the Thjórsá, and skirting the E. side of the *Búdarháls*. Immediately after leaving *Hvannagil*, the traveller crosses the *Svartá*, and then rides over the watershed down towards the *Kaldakvísl* a rushing stream of glacier water, hardly fordable so far S. (perhaps near *Illugaver* lying to the N. E.).

Near the *Kaldakvísl*, there is a poor pasture called *Klifshagavellir*, where a hut has been constructed.

Hvannagil—*Klifshagavellir* 2 hrs.

From *Klifshagavellir* along the *Kaldakvísl* in a S. W. direction, (the *Búdarháls* to the right) to the junction of the *Kaldakvísl* with the *Tungnaá*, and then along this river till it joins the *Thjórsá*; here is a pasture. Here the *Tungnaá* is crossed in boats; at present there are two boats, which the shepherds use in spring and autumn, but they are generally on the S. bank of the river, so that one cannot cross; one of them ought to be stationed on the north bank.

From the *Tungnaá* the road leads in a S. direction to the nearest farm *Galtalækur*.

M. THE ARNARFELL ROAD.

If coming from the S. one cannot cross near the Sóleyjarhöfði, or if on the way from the N. one has an idea that a crossing here will be impossible, the route along the borders of the *Hofsjökull* is the one to be taken. In this way each of the *Jökulkvíslar* (glacier rivulets) can be crossed se-

parately, before they empty themselves into the Thjórsá thereby making this river unfordable.

Coming from the N. one branches off to the W. (after having crossed the Fjórdungakvísl) towards the Thjórsá's main tributary (cairns indicate the place) passing some hills, which hide the tributary for some time.

The route is now *a little N. of Arnarfell id mikla* the most important mountain on the border of the Jökull. Then the Thjórsá's main tributary is crossed, and subsequently the so called Thjórsárvíslar. At times some of them can be like torrents, and it is necessary to be cautious on account of the beds and banks being soft and swampy.

As a rule there are not many difficulties to be surmounted. After 2 hrs. slow riding across the stony sands (where the rivers constantly change their course), the border of the moraines is reached. These extensive moraines of sand and gravel, form a girth in front of the Jökull. The road now leads towards the S. W. along the moraines, in the direction of *Arnarfell id mikla*, very slow riding is necessary, as the ground is exceedingly rocky. *Arnarfell id mikla* consists of two groups of mountains, around, and between which, the Jökull (glacier) sends down minor glaciers. From these proceed the so called Arnarfellskvíslar.

The most northerly of these streams is crossed, then the traveller rides past the most northerly group of mountains, (encircled by two minor glaciers) past the highest point of the most southerly group, (at the foot — luxuriant vegetation) and comes to an *excellent pasture*, sheltered by the S. side of the mountain.

Sprengisandur-main route S. of the Fjórdungakvísl—Arnarfell id mikla 4 hrs.

From Arnarfell id mikla, across the Arnarfellskvíslar, then the S. E. corner of the Jökull is skirted, following the outer border of the moraines, where *Salix Glauca*, *Angelica*, and grass grow, all the Múlakvíslar are crossed here, and then there is only a short distance to the Miklakvísl, from there, a very short ride to the *pasture Nauthagi*, near the hot springs, at the foot of a group of mountains on the border of the Jökull.

Arnarfell id mikla—Nauthagi $2\frac{1}{2}$ —3 hrs. From Nauthagi to the S. W. across the Blautakvísl broadest part S. of the Kerlingarfjöll (about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.). The bed of the river is not very bad. After having crossed the river, one rides in a semicircle to the *Sóleyjarhöfði* following the Blautakvísl in a S. E. direction.

Nauthagi—Sóleyjarhöfði 2 hrs. The road now leads towards the S. following the Thjórsá as already described. One can also ride in a direct southerly line to the Dalsá, over the plateau, where the road is easily found in good weather; here it may be mentioned, that one can go *direct from Arnarfell id mikla to the Sóleyjarhöfði in 3—4 hrs.* under favourable circumstances, and if the rivers are not swollen, but it is hardly worth while attempting this, it being better to take the longer and safer road by Nauthagi.

One can ride to the Kerlingarfjöll from Nauthagi as well as from the Sóleyjarhöfði in a few hours.

It takes about *5 hrs. to ride from the Sóleyjarhöfði* to the pasture (not very fertile) near the *Áskardsá*, in the centre of the N. side of the *Kerlingarfjöll*. One proceeds between the Kerlingarfjöll and the Hofsjökull. From the *Áskardsá to Gránanes on the Kjölur (3 hrs.)*.

N. SIDE ROUTE TO THE JÖKULDALUR (= *Nyidalur*) in the Tungnafellsjökull.

If the horses are heavily laden, and halt is not made at the pasture near Kidagil, the distance to be covered in one day between the pastures Innri-Mosar (in the Mjófidalur) and Eyvindarkofaver will be rather great. But the days journey may be broken by branching off for a couple of hours towards the E. to the *Jökuldalur (= Nyidalur) in the S. part of the Tungnafellsjökull*, where there is *pasturage*. Coming from the North the road branches off to the S. E. (after having crossed the Fjórdungsvatn) and keeps in the direction of the S. end of the Tungnafellsjökull. In foggy weather, it is advisable to go on to the Fjórdungakvísl and follow this river towards the Jökuldalur. Coming from the S. the road branches off a little S. of the Fjórdungakvísl.

Mjófidalur—Jökuldalur 9½—10 hrs. Jökuldalur—Eyvindarkofaver 5 hrs. one can travel *from the Jökuldalur direct to Arnarfell id mikla in 6—7 hrs.*

The number of hours stated for each journey is calculated on the horse being kept at an even pace. If one has a good horse, and not too many pack-horses, the time can be greatly shortened, as the following instance shows. Six members of the Althing (parliament) left Mýri on the 18th July at 1-30 p. m. and arrived at Skridufell on the 20th at 8 p. m.

Mýri—Mosar 2½ hrs.

Mosar—Kidagil 1½ „

Kidagil—Arnarfell	9 $\frac{1}{4}$ hrs.
Arnarfell—Nauthagi	2 "
Nauthagi—Dalsá	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Dalsá—Skúmstungur	4 "
Skúmstungur—Skridufell	2 "

They rode from one inhabited place to another in 54 $\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. (halts not included) which shows that they were dauntless riders, and had excellent horses. A still quicker ride from the south (36 hrs.) has been accomplished by *Jon Oddsson*. He did not take much rest, the first time, was at the Kisá. (5 hours during the day,) the second time, near Eyvindarkofaver where he intended to pass the night, but the swans frightened his 3 horses so that they tried to get away, and he continued his journey after a short rest of 3 hrs. Later on he rested a little near Kidagil. He covered the distance from the 7th—8th Sept. 1897, when he returned home, after having accompanied me across the sands.

O. FROM THE SPRENGISANDUR TO THE EYJAFJARDARDALUR.

For Travellers wishing to go direct to the interior of the Eyjafjardardalur from the Sprengisandur, it is best to *start* from a place situated about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hrs ride S. of the *Fjórðungsvatn*.

The road curves to the NW. towards the *Laugafell* then to Eystri-Pollar, then NNE. to the Ullarvötn, and E. down into the valley.

The traveller makes straight for the *Laugafell*, which is visible as an isolated cupola shaped mountain, rather far to the N. of the Hofsjökull and crosses the Bergvatnaskvísl (= Bergkvísl) turning with this river to the right.

After leaving the river, a ride of 10 minutes across the watershed, to the tributaries of the Laugakvísl, one of the sources of the Jökulsá eystri, one follows this river, with the Laugafell to the left, and the hill Laugalda to the right. At the foot of Laugaldas W. side, are the *hot springs (Laugar)* near a tributary of the Laugarkvísl which rises N. of Laugalda.

Pasturage here, fairly good.

From the Sprengisandur Road to the *Laugafell* 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ —4 hrs.
Jökuldalur—*Laugafell* 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ —7 hrs. From *Arnarfell* id mikla across the *Thjorsárkvíslar* to the N E. and along the routes stated, to the *Laugafell* 9—10 hrs.

From the *Laugafell* to the N. W., over stony ground (crossing a stream) to Eystri-Pollar (near the Jökulsá-eystri) (1 $\frac{1}{2}$

hrs.), good grass here. The place is easily found if one does not go too far N. It must also be mentioned here, that there are no landmarks to form a guidance on this route. In foggy weather it is best to proceed along the tributary of the Laugakvísl, then along the Laugakvísl itself, to the *Jökulsá-eystri*, and on to the *Eystri-Pollar*. One is now on the *Vatnahjalla-vegur* (vegur = road) which from the Kjalvegur leads direct to the mountain *Vatnahjalli*, near the interior of the *Eyjaírdardalur*. This is a very bad and stony road, especially the latter part of it.

From *Eystri-Pollar* in a N. N. E. direction (a very rocky tract of land) to the *Ullarvötn*, three small lakes, in a barren district, to the west of the *Vatnahjalli*. The *Vatnahjalli*, after which the road is named is a prominent mountain on the border of the *Eyjaírdardalur*. Having reached the S. end of the lakes, the traveller rides along the E. side of them in a N. direction with the isolated mountain *Hjallahnúkur* to the right until the border of the *Eyjaírdardalur* is reached. Towards the end of the road there are old cairns, which are not always in the best places. Descending into the valley through a laborious passage, the road leads to the N. to *Tjarnir* (a farm) on the E. side of the river.

To the W. of *Tjarnir*, and a little further S. there is a labourer's cottage.

<i>Eystri-Pollar</i> — <i>Ullarvötn</i>	2	hrs.
<i>Ullarvötn</i> —Border of the valley	1½	”
Border of the valley—Bottom of the valley	½	”
From there to <i>Tjarnir</i>	½	”
<i>Eystri-Pollar</i> — <i>Tjarnir</i>	4½	”
<i>Tjarnir</i> — <i>Akureyri</i>	8—10	”

There is still to be mentioned, that one can ride from the *Eyjaírdardalur* to the *Laugafell* through the *Sölvadalur* and the *Thormóðstadadalur* up into the highlands. In the valleys the road is very bad, but it is better when on the plateau of the highland, where it is said, a few cairns are to be found. The ascent is not so steep, nor so difficult as from *Tjarnir*.

By studying the sketch-map, the traveller will not find it difficult to plan his route. The ride from one pasture to the other need not take more than 8—10 hours.

The passes in the interior of Iceland, near the *Jökulls* and the *Sprengisandur* are not so dreadful as formerly supposed.

Travelling is comparatively easy, and will be still more so, when the roads are properly marked off with cairns.

LEIÐIR AÐ OG FRA KILI (I., II. OG III. MYNDBLAÐ).

A. ÚR SKAGAFIRÐI AÐ HVERAVÖLLUM OG KJALHRAUNI.

Áttaviti. Frá Gilhaga er riðið í SV. upp í Gilhagadal með Gilá; eftir hálf tíma sel (t. h.) og svo áfram sunnanmegin dals. Framhjá hagabeit (Vatnafellsflói). Dalurinn rennur smátt og smátt saman við heiðina; þar eru hólar (Grjóthólar); leiðin hverfur vestur á við og um hálfa stund er riðið fram með lág og farið yfir 2 læki. Við enda lágarinnar ljelegur hagi — upp brekku og þá hefst Litlisandur. Hólar tveir (Skallhólar) eru þegar t. v. (2 stundir frá Gilhaga), áttin VS. Frá miðjum sandinum má sjá yfir Kjöl. Þá hallar undan fæti jafnt og þjett. Aðalmannsvötn sjást, seinna Svartá; stefna skal á mitt vatnið — yfir læk, sem sprettur upp á sandinum (Brunnalækur). Eftir $1\frac{1}{2}$ tíma reið er sandurinn búinn við brekku eina, og þar rennur lækurinn niður. Farið yfir Svartá ($1\frac{1}{2}$ stund frá brekkunni). — [Vegur útúr t. h. til Mælifells] — yfir læk, er rennur í Aðalmannsvötn (Vopnalækur), fram með læknum (á v. h.) og áfram í SV. — Þá kemur að suðurenda Aðalmannsvatna. Sæluhús (20 mín. frá Svartá; $4\frac{1}{2}$ st. frá Gilhaga) og hagi. Þaðan sjest Mælifellshnjúkur í NA, en til suðurs sjest ekki langt. Áfram í suður yfir Haugakvísl (10 mín. frá sæluhúsinu), fram með henni (á v. h.) í 25 mín., þá er riðið beint í vestur (t. h.) yfir brekku (NB. reiðgötturnar halda áfram með læknum í S.) — yfir smáar hæðir og dældir, sand og steinsljettur — kallað Þingmannaháls — yfir Fossádalslæk (rennur í Svartá) stöðugt í SV. Eftir rúma $1\frac{1}{2}$ st. frá Aðalmannsvötnum kemur á brekku, og þar fyrir neðan er mikið flatlendi með Blöndu osfrv. Rjett fyrir neðan brekkuna rennur Galtará (í Blöndu). Ljelegir hagar þar, Galtarárdrög (6 st. frá Gilhaga). Þaðan sjest í S. á v. h. lítill hóll á sljettunni, hinn vestasti af Vékelshaugum (fjarlægðin á uppdrætti Bj. Gunnl. frá þeim stað, er riðið er yfir Galtará, og að Vékelshaugum er altöf mikil); þar að auk má eygja jöklana og fjöllin á Kili og Blöndu. Svo áfram og stefnt á hinn vestasta af haugunum yfir stein-, sand- og helluflötu; til og hvar gamlar götur margar — LambamannaSteinn, þar lögðu ferðamenn í gamla daga stein ($\frac{1}{2}$ st. frá Galtará); eftir 10 mín. kemur að vestasta haugnum, hagi, sæluhús; austasti haugurinn liggur nokkuð frá í N. A. Skömmu síðar farið yfir Haugakvísl (rennur í Blöndu), — þá Lækjarbrot (rennur og í Bl.) — hjer og hvar sjást gamlar götur — fram með Mannabeinavatni — þá yfir læk (rennur í Ströngukvísl), og bráðum er þá komið að Ströngu-kvísl (2 st. frá Galtará, 8 st. frá Gilhaga); hún er 4—500 ál. breið og fellur í mörgum kvíslum (álum).

Haugahraun liggur milli Galtarár og Haugakvíslar.

Ásgeirstunga — — Haugakvíslar og Ströngukvíslar.

Guðlaugstúngur liggja milli Ströngukvíslar og Svartárvíslar.

Svartártunga — — Svartárvíslar og Blöndu.

Fyrir sunnan Ströngukvísl er hagi. — Frá Ströngukvísl er stefnt til Blöndu og riðið í bug og fyrst stefnt nokkuð til vesturs á Lángjökul og Hrutafell og þá til suðurs á Dúfufell; fyrir framan og neðan það er Rjúpnafell. Blanda fellur 7—800 ál. á h. h. Farið yfir Herjadalslæk — gömul varðtótt frá fjárkláða tímunum 1860 — Svartakvísl ($1\frac{1}{4}$ st. frá Ströngukvísl) og jökulvatn í, þótt hún heiti svo (áður full bergvatns). Á ská áfram á h. h. sjest einstakt fjall, Sandkúlufell á Kúluheiði NV. frá Rjúpnafelli. — Kemur að Blöndu ($\frac{1}{2}$ st. frá Svörtukvísl, $1\frac{3}{4}$ fra Ströngukvísl, $\frac{9}{4}$ st. frá Gilhaga). Vað rjett fyrir ofan ármót Seyðisár og Blöndu; vaðið breytist nokkuð, botninn allgóður; vaðbreiddin er 150—200 ál.; stefnt er á bratta en lága brekku og verður að teyma hestana þar upp. Frá Blöndu er haldið áfram fram með Seyðisá (á h. h.) — margar fornar götur. Eftir 20 mín. er komið að Biskupsþúfu, alllitil (nokkurra feta há) þúfa, er ekki sjest fyrr en að er komið. Hagi. Rjett við er fjárrjett. Svo áfram með Seyðisá, klukkustund, svo í $S\frac{1}{4}$ st. að Rjúpnafelli; þaðan útsjón í S yfir Kjalhraun og fjöllin í kring um það. Í V (á h. h.) sjest reykurinn frá Hveravöllum; þaðan rennur lækur (Hveralækur) í Seyðisá. Hveravellir liggja $\frac{9}{4}$ st. ferð frá Rjúpnafelli, um $1\frac{1}{2}$ st. frá vaðinu á Blöndu og um $11\frac{1}{2}$ —12 st. leið frá Gilhaga. Áningartími er ótalinn. Norður á bóginn er Mælifellshnjúkur góður til að átta sig á. Frá Blöndu-vaðinu er þá fyrst riðið NV. með Mælifellshnjúk á h. h. og fyrst farið upp á brekkurnar austan við Blöndu við Galtarárdrög. Þá er hægt að finna leiðina að Aðalmannsvötnum, þaðan er svo riðið í NA. með Mælifellshnjúk á v. h.

Annars skal þess getið, að ekki þarf að leggja upp frá Gilhaga, þegar fara skal Kjöl upp úr Skagafirði. Leggja má og upp frá Mælifelli t. d. En hvort sem heldur er, verður að fara að Aðalmannsvötnum og þaðan áfram, sem sagt hefur verið. Sama er að segja, ef farið er upp úr Svartárdal.

B. KJALVEGUR UPP ÚR HÚNAVATNSSÝSLU.

Lagt er upp frá Stóradal (næsta höfn, er skip koma til, er Blönduós). Þaðan er riðið í S-A með Blöndu allan daginn nærfelt á jafnsljettu. Stefnt eftir Rjúpnafelli (Dúfufelli) — Blanda nokkuð frá til v. h.

Fyrst er farið yfir Gilsá, litla á eða læk, er rennur úr Gilsvatni. Stundu síðar farið fram hjá vatni (á h. h.), Friðmundar-

vatn. Mjófavatn, sem stendur á uppdrættimum, sjest ekki. Farið rjett fram hjá Þristikluvatni á h. h., þá yfir Sandá og loks Seyðisá. Allar þessar ár renna úr vestri og falla í Blöndu. Þegar er komið er yfir Seyðisá, er komið að haganum við Biskupsþúfu. Þaðan og að Rjúpnafelli er $\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið og farið yfir læk einn. Stóridalur — Hveravellir er dagleið.

Norður á við er sama leið farin fram með Blöndu að vestan og stefnan miðuð við skarð milli tveggja fjalla. Fjallið á hægri h. við skarðið litur út sem hryggur út úr Mælifellshnjúk. Gilsvatn á v. h., Blanda á h.

C. VATNAHJALLAVEGUR (III. OG IV. MYNDBLAÐ).

Úr Eyjafjarðardal um Kjöl í A—V.

Spölkorn fyrir sunnan fremsta bæinn í Eyjafjarðardal, Tjarnir, er farið upp á Vatnahjalla vestan megin dalsins (hálf st. þángað sem hæst er); vörður vísa leið. Hið litla fjall Hjallahnjúkur er efst uppi á Vatnahjalla á v. h. Vestast á fjallinu sjest vatn rjett framundan og tvö önnur lítið eitt norðar og vestar; það eru Ullarvötn; vegurinn liggur sunnan við nánasta vatnið. Þaðan liggur leiðin nokkuru vestar og suðvestar um grýtt og erfitt land yfirferðar að Eystri-Pollum; hagi þar (5 st. frá Tjörnum).

Lækur lítill rennur þaðan í vestur út í Eystri-Jökulsá; með honum er farið öðruhvorumegin. Leiðin er mjög stutt. Oftast er mjög erfitt að komast yfir Jökulsá — þá er stöðugt riðið í S—V, aðalstefnuna, fyrst milli hóla ekki mikilla (Laugafell sjest á ská bakvið á v. h., og Hofsjökull í S.). Eftir $\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið frá Jökulsá er komið að Vestri-Pollum; hagi þar, á h. h. við veginn. Á v. h. rjett hjá Hofsjökli sjest röð af smátindum, Illviðrahnjúkur. Annars oftast nær lítið víðsýni. Þá er farið yfir litla á, Bleik-álukvísl, hún þornar stundum upp. Þá aftur hæðadrög og tveir smáhólar á v. h., þá yfir Hraunþúfukvísl, er kemur úr Ásbjarnarvatni (á v. h.) og rennur að Klaustri í Eystridal. Rjett við suðvesturhorn vatnsins liggur lítið fjall (á v. h.) — þá koma smáhæðir og svo Lambahraun (á v. h.); rjett við sjest fjall, ekki alltíð, Ásbjarnarfell (á v. h.). Lengra í burt við veginn — og vestar — við hrausendann liggur Sáta (á v. h.), fjall í röndinni á Hofsjökli og líkist heysátu. Farið yfir norðurhorn hrausins, þar sem mjótt er. Eftir tæprar stundar reið í S. V. kemur Eystrikvísl Jökulsár vestri og svo aftur eftir stundar reið Vestrikvísl. Fyrir vestan hana koma aftur smáhæðir og hólar á við og dreif, Eyfirðingahólar (á v. h.). Sáta er þaðan að sjá beint í suður (á v. h.). Nú er stefnt fyrir norðan Hrutafell (Dúfufell) á norðurendann af Kjalhrauni og farið niður brekku, Fossa-

brekku, sunnanverða; með henni rennur Haugakvísl. Yfir hana, og svo er $\frac{3}{4}$ st. reið til Ströngukvíslar, þá yfir Biskupsþúfu til Rjúpnafells osfrv., sbr. A-leiðina.

Tjarnir—Vestri-Pollar 6 st., Vestri-Pollar—Hveravellir 11 st.

C. 2. FRÁ S—V. TIL N—A.

Lagt upp af Kjalvegi fyrir norðan Blöndu. Yfir hana á oftnefndu vaði rjett fyrir austan ármót hennar og Seyðisár. Þá er stefnt fyrir norðan Sátu, sem fyr var nefnd, og farið um flatlendi og yfir um nokkrar smáár, er renna í Blöndu. Þegar Sátu nálgast, kemur í ljós melalda, er gengur út úr henni vestur á við. Nú er riðið N—NA. og aldan þrædd; lækur fellur fyrir vestan hana. Frá þessari öldu er farið beint í N—A., og þá má bráðlega sjá Illviðrahnjúk (ef bjart er yfir má sjá hann frá Rjúpnafelli). Stefna skal fyrir norðan hann og riða lítið eitt fyrir norðan Jökulinn. Þar er farið yfir Jökulsá vestri; hún er ekki djúp. Alla þessa leið er vegurinn heldur góður, en jarðvegurinn er alveg ófrær og gróðurlaus.

Frá Illviðrahnjúk má eigi stefna of mikið í N. til þess að rata Vestri-Polla.

Þegar Fr. Howell fór Vatnahjallaveg 1898, fór hann of N—A. lega frá Illviðrahnjúk og kom eftir lángan tíma að á nokkurri; þar var hagi og hann var þar um nóttina. Eftir á reyndist, að á þessi kom frá Vestri-Pollum. Hann var 10 st. frá Hveravöllum þangað og fór hægt. Jökulsá vestri var hjerumbil miðja vega milli nefndra staða. Á uppdráttunum yfir þetta svæði hlýtur fjarlægðin milli beggja Jökulsá eftir hans skoðun að vera miklu minni, en hún er, fjarlægðin frá Jökulsá og til Eyjafjarðar aftur á móti of mikil. Þetta hið síðara er rjett. Á uppdrætti þeim, er hjer fylgir, er þetta leiðrjett nokkuð, en fyr en gerðar eru nákvæmar landmælingar, er ekki hægt að hafa fjarlægðina rjetta. Daginn eftir hjelt hann stöðugt í N—A. Farið var yfir norðurendann á hálsi nokkurum og eftir 2 st. reið kom hann að Jökulsá eystri, þar sem hún rann í gljúfri; þá var hann líklega kominn 4 «miles» norður af rjetttri leið. Í landsuðri frá hálsinum var stórt vatn. Rjett mundi vera, segir sögumaðurinn, að fara yfir hálsinn fyrir sunnan vatnið og þá fyrst riða að því, er það ter að greinast. Þar var ágætt vað yfir ána, og var það nú merkt með vörðum. Viðar voru við vegina reistar vörður, en eftir að það reyndist, að þeir höfðu farið of norðarlega, verða þær að teljast villandi.

Spölkorn fyrir austan vaðið lágu Eystri-Pollar, þaðan farið leið þá, sem síðar verður talin, um Öræfin í N. A., þá fyrir sunnan Ullarvötn (sbr. Sprengisandsleiðina »O«), $5\frac{1}{2}$ st. frá Eystri-Pollum til Tjarna um næstum óferan veg.

Í björtu veðri sjest Illviðrahnjúkur greinilega frá Hveravöllum, og lítur þá svo út, sem hann sje áfastur jöklinum eins og Sata.

Frá Illviðrahnjúk má sjá Vatnahjalla, búngutind, nokkru stærri, en aðra fjallatinda í A. og N. A. Þaðan má og sjá klettadal nokkurn, er lítur út fyrir að ganga frá N. V. til S. A. Þangað var stefnunni ekki beint, heldur í A—N—A.

D. LEIÐIN UM NÝJABÆJARFJALL.

Enn skal þess getið, að frá Eystridal inst í Skagafirði og til Eyjafjarðardals liggur enn íjallvegur, sem þó er ekki lengur farinn. Frá svæðinu fyrir sunnan Ábæ liggur mjög grýttur og erfiður vegur yfir Nýjabæjarfjall austur á við yfir auðnir, eins og stefnt sje á Villingadal. Þar eru engir hagar handa hestunum.

E. HVERAVELLIR—HVÍTÁRNES. 6—7 st.

Velja má um tvo vegu og eru báðir auðfundnir.

1) Annar fyrir austan Kjalhraun, hann er styttri og tíðfarnari. Liggur frá Hveravöllum í boga kringum hraunið að Dúfufelli (1 st.), þaðan áfram um hraunið að austurhlið Kjalfells (1 st.), svo í S. A. að Gránanesi (1 st.), en það er þar sem kvíslir koma saman og mynda Svartá. Vestari kvíslin rennur undan Kjalfelli og má því fara með henni þaðan til Gránaness; þar er hagi góður.

Frá Gránanesi liggur vegurinn í S. V. að Hvítárnesi (í túngunni milli Hvítár og Jökulkvíslar) með Fúlukvísl á h. h.

Með tveim hásum, er Skútar heita, er þá farið, hvorum eftir annan (vestanmegin); milli þeirra við Svartá er hagi, Svartárbugar, og kofi. Þá er farið áfram að Hvítárnesi, þar sem Hvítá sveigist austur á við. Þar er sæluhús, og þar er farið yfir Hvítá á bátum, ef þeir eru í lagi, og að minsta kosti annar þeirra norðanmegin við ána; annars verður að reyna að komast yfir um á Skagafirðingavaði, og þá má reisa tjald.

Hjerumbil 700 ál. í suðaustur frá sæluhúsinu er riðið — með straumnum — forbrekkis út í lítinn hólma, svo í annan og þriðja — stöðugt ekki langt frá vinstra bakkanum. Úr síðasta hólmanum er stýrt þvers í gegnum strauminn — heldur móti honum en með — og að norðurendanum á lítilli ey, úr henni móti straumnum að annari meiri ey og þaðan í land; vaðið er allhættulegt, því að ef farið er þótt ekki sje nema nokkur skref út á við, kemst maður í sandbleytu.

2) Vestur um Kjalhraun í dældinni milli hraunsins og höfða þeirra, er gánga út úr Lángjökli (hin svonefndu Tjarnardalsfjöll), og er þar lítil á. Eftir 2 st. reið frá Hveravöllum kemur að

Þjófadall; hann gengur á h. h. inn á milli Lángjökulshöfðanna, meðal þeirra er Þjófahnjúkur mestur. Inni í dalnum er hagi — en leiðin liggur fram hjá dalsmynninu —; en að haganum má og komast með því að riða yfir lágan háls, áður en komið er að mynninu.

Frá Þjófadall kemur jökulá, Fúlakvísl; hún rennur í boga fram með rótum hins fagra Hrútafells niður á við til Hvítárvatns.

Vegurinn liggur áfram frá Þjófadall með Fúlukvísl suður að Hvítárvatni; líka má fara niður á aðalveginn um Kjöl og svo suður.

Þessi leið er nokkru lengri en sú, er nefnd er í a-liðnum, en hún er ákaflega skemtileg og falleg. Þeir þrír Hrútafellsjökurnir gnapa yfir höfði manns öðru megin, og til hinnar handar liggur Kjalhraun með eldgígnum Strýti. SkemtiFERða - menn verða endilega að fara þessa leiðina.

Hveravellir—Hvítárvatn 6—7 st. Svæðið milli Hvítárness og Gránaness heitir Biskupstúngna afrjettir.

Hagar í Hvítárnesi og við Hvítárvatn, Gránanes, í Þjófadall, á Hveravöllum, við Biskupsþúfu.

F. GRÁNANES—KERLÍNGARFJÖLL, 3 st.

Frá Gránanesi er riðið í boga og stefnt á miðhluta Kerlingarfjalla, þar sem hverarnir eru. Fyrst er farið yfir eystri kvísl Svartár og þá í N. A., síðan í A. S. A., um hæðott og grýtt land, og stefnunni haldið. Yfir um smálæki, seinna yfir Blákvísl, og svo litið eitt í S. A. að litlu einstöku felli (austan við það) og svo stefnt beint á Kerlingarfjöll, þar sem hverarnir sjást rjúka; yfir dálítið hæðadrag rjett fyrir norðan Jökulsá, hún getur verið vatnsmikil og ekki hættulaust yfir hana að fara. Yfir er farið fyrir neðan hæðina. Hinumegin árinna er þegar farið yfir mjóan háls, og þá er maður kominn í dalverpi nokkuð; um það rennur Áskarðsá út í Jökulsá. Þar er ljelegur hagi og kofi lítill. Einnar st. reið upp í gegnum gilið við Áskarðsá og að hverunum.

Að Kerlingarfjöllum má og komast sunnan að án þess að fara yfir Hvítá eða Jökulkvísl. Þá skal lagt upp frá Hruna eða Túngufelli í Hrunamannahrepp og riða í N. A., t. d. til hagans við Svínárnes og svo í N. A. Nota má þá haga fyrir sunnan Kerlingarfjöll við Leppistúngur; þar er kofi.

G. HVÍTÁRNES—GULLFOSS—GEYSIR.

Frá Skagfirðingavaði skal riða suður með Hvítá, fyrst um sinn þó nokkuð frá henni fram með Bláfelli (þó má og fara yfir Bláfellsháls vestanvert); þar er nokkuð mýrótt, en sá vegur er styttri. Nú má fara lítinn krók og þræða Hvítá að Gullfossi og

svo fara vestur á við að Haukadal og Geysi yfir Túngufljót; nú er á því trjebrú — eða beina leið að Haukadal og Geysi, og þá er líka farið yfir Túngufljót.

H. FRÁ HVÍTÁRNESI AÐ TÚNGUFELLI.

Ef fara skal frá Hvítárnesi niður í Hrunamannahrepp, verður að fara yfir Jökulkvísl á vaði, og má gera það nálægt því, sem hún fellur í Hvítá (þar er í henni fallegur foss); þá er farið með Hvítá austanmegin, en þó ekki áin þrædd, heldur svo að við og við sjest í hana. Landið er hrjóstrugt og autt; en að fornu var hjer í Hrunamannafrjetti heil byggð. Viða eru rústir af bæjum, sem löngu hafa lagst í eyði.

Þá er farið yfir Grjótá — og síðan um land, sem er fult af sandi, móbergi, leir og grjóti, lækjum og árfarvegum; þá farið yfir Sandá til Svinárness, þar koma saman Sviná og Sandá, og þar er hagi og kofi. Þar á eftir kemur grjótsljetta, Harðivöllur, erfið yfirferðar; þá fara eyðibæirnir að koma í smádældóttu landslagi, þar vex víðir osfrv. Á móts við Gullfoss eru rústirnar af Hamarsholti, og þá nálgast maður Túngufell, fyrsta bæinn austan Hvítár, eftir að farið hefur verið um dæld nokkura, vaxna birkirunnum, og eftir að farið hefur verið fram hjá nokkurum fjárhúsum, er liggja langt frá bænum. Þaðan má svo fara áfram að Hruna, og er þá um byggðar sveitir að fara.

Á Hrunamannafrjettum eru auk þeirra haga, er nefndir eru við Leppistúngur og Svinárnes, við Áskarðsá og Kerlingarfjöll, líka hagar við Fosslæg fyrir sunnan Svinárnes og við Búðará fyrir norðan Túngufell.



LEIÐIR AÐ OG FRÁ SPRENGISANDI.

I. AÐALLEIÐIN YFIR SPRENGISAND

liggur úr Suðurþingeyjarsýslu, frá efsta bænum í Bárðardal, Mýri (vestan Skjálfandafjöts), í útsuður yfir sandinn og að vaðinu við Sóleypjarhöfða; en þar skiftist vegurinn í tvent, og liggur önnur leiðin austan Þjórsár, en hin vestan.

Frá Mýri er riðið í suður, að Íshólsvatni ($1\frac{1}{4}$ stundar reið), og er þar góð beit sunnanvert við vatnið, þar sem eyðijörðin Íshóll liggur.

Frá Íshóli er riðið í vestur yfir fjallið niður í Mjófadalefni og eftir honum í útsuður til áningarstaðanna Fremri- eða Ytrimosa (2 stunda reið). Þaðan er $\frac{1}{2}$ stundar reið til annars góðs áningarstaðar, Innrimosa. Þaðan er enn haldið í sömu átt fram með ánni yfir hrjóstrugt hæðaland suður undir Kiðagilshnúk (2 st. reið). Svo er farið yfir Kiðagil hérumbil $\frac{1}{2}$ mílu fyrir vestan ármót Kiðagilsár og Skjálfandafjöts, og stöðugt haldið í útsuður. (Þaðan og niður að ármótunum verður ekki komist yfir gilið, en við ármótin má komast yfir það).

Vilji menn nota annanhvorn hinna lélegu áningarstaða við Kiðagil, verða menn að sveigja út af aðalleiðinni í austur, annaðhvort í grastó norðan gilsins eða í Áfangatorfur sunnan þess, og er til hvorstveggja $\frac{1}{2}$ stundar reið. Nota má og áningarstaðinn Fljótsdal (við Skjálfandafjót) nokkru sunnar, en á öllum þessum þremur stöðum er léleg beit.

Frá vesturhluta Kiðagils, þar sem aðalleiðin liggur yfir það, er haldið áfram í útsuður. Þar hefst hinn eiginlegi Sprengisandur og nær alla leið suður að Eyvindarkofaveri. Er þá stefnt vestan við mikinn hæðaklasa, Fjórðungsöldu. Á svæðinu millum Kiðagils og Fjórðungsöldu er hingað og þangað dálítið af mosa og í dældum ofurlítil grassnöp (fyrir fé). Fyrst er riðið fram með einni af uppsprettum Kiðagilsár, síðan er farið yfir Kiðagilsdrag, þá Hældrag, svo fram með Kvislarbotnum og yfir Klyfberadrag, sem alt eru dældir, er stundum fyllast af vatni, en úr þeim er afrensli austur í Fljótið. Því næst er haldið upp á við og komast menn þá brátt á móts við Fjórðungsöldu. Hafa menn þá nokkra hrið getað greint landnorðurhornið á Hofsjökli, en nú sést það greinilega; og nú má og eygja Tungnafellsjökul og útnorðurhornið á Vatnajökli.

Enn er stefnt í útsuður og riðið fram með Fjórðungsvatni, sem er aflangt vatn fyrir vestan Fjórðungsöldu, sem stundum þornar upp á sumrin.

Frá Kiðagili að Fjórðungsöldu er 3 st. reið, fram með Fjórðungsvatni 1 st. reið.

Vegurinn liggur enn í útsuður (frá suðurendanum á Fjórðungsvatni liggur leiðin til Jökuldals út af aðalleiðinni — 3 st. reið) yfir það svæði, er vötn deilast og falla bæði suður og norður. Brátt fer sandinum að halla suður á bóginn. Þjórásá sést ekki. Hofsjökull er á hægri hönd, en Tungnafellsjökull fram undan til vinstri handar. Svo er farið yfir Fjórðungakvísl, sem kemur úr Tungnafellsjökli. Hún er slæm yfirferðar á vorin.

Frá Fjórðungsöldu að Fjórðungakvísl 2—3 st. reið.

($\frac{1}{2}$ st. síðar liggur Arnarfellsvegurinn út úr vestur yfir Þjórásá; þar eru hlaðnar vörður) — Nú er farið yfir Hafurmýrardrag og -kvísl. — (Þar liggur út úr leiðin til Jökuldals fyrir þá, sem koma að sunnan). — Arnarfell ið mikla er beint í vestur. — Hér má nú líka koma auga á Þjórásá. — Þá er farið yfir Hreysikvísl.

Frá Fjórðungakvísl að Hreysikvísl 4 st. reið.

Frá Hreysikvísl að Eyvindarkofaveri $\frac{3}{4}$ st. reið.

Eyvindarver eða -kofaver er stórt, mýrlent og grösugt láglandi, sem gengur eins og flói inn úr Þjórásárdalnum. Þar er ágæt beit. Menn tjalda sunnantil á mýrunum við rústirnar af Eyvindarkofa. Frá Eyvindarveri er riðið í útsuður fram með Þjórásá að Sóleyjarhöfða.

Rétt fyrir neðan Eyvindarver er farið yfir Eyvindarkvísl með nokkuð blautum sandbotni. Síðan er riðið vestur fyrir Sandvatn, sem er lítið stöðuvatn, og jafnharðan á eftir austur fyrir Eyvindarvatn, sem er nokkru stærra. Þá er farið austanvert við stóra grasflá, hið svo nefnda Þúfuver, og eru útjaðrar þess blautir og hættulegir. Gegnum flána rennur Þúfuverskvísl frá austri og út í Þjórásá. Er sú kvísl töluvert athugaverð, með því bakkar hennar eru mjög blautir. Er þá haldið í austur fram með henni, unz komið er að dálitlum fossi, sem fellur niður basaltkletta. Er bezt að fara yfir hana á grýttu vaði rétt fyrir neðan fossinn. Skömmu síðar koma menn að tjaldstað, þar sem sjá má fjárrétt, sem gangnamenn úr Rangárvallasýslu nota í fjallgöngum á haustin. Þar er gras og víðir. Hálfri stundu síðar koma menn að Sóleyjarhöfða, sem er löng hæð eða höfði fram með Þjórásá.

Frá Eyvindarveri að Sóleyjarhöfða 2 st. reið.

Suðvestan við höfðann er vaðið, eina vaðið á Þjórásá áður en kemur niður í bygð fyrir sunnan. Er þar riðið frá eystri bakkanum út í lítinn hólma og þaðan yfir að vestri bakkanum. Á öllum þrem stöðum eru vörður, sem sýna hvar riða skal. Austurallinn er mjórri, en dýpri. Í leysingum á vorin og þegar miklir hitar ganga er vaðið ófært. Fyrir vestan vaðið er graslandi og kofi.

Sé Sprengisandur farinn í gagnstæða átt (frá suðri til norðurs), er farið fram með Þjórásá að austan, milli Hof- og Tungnafellsökuls. Miðja veginni milli jöklanna sést Fjórðungsalda eins og flöt

hæð, sem ris upp úr sléttunni. Menn ríða vestan við hana. Frá Fjórðungsöldu halda menn í landnorður að Kiðagili o. s. frv.

K. LEIÐIN VESTAN ÞJÓRSÁR OFAN Í ÁRNESSÝSLU.

Frá Sóleyjarhöfða er haldið áfram í útsuður, stöðugt fram með Þjórsá. Þá er farið yfir þessar ár: Knífa, sem stundum er ill yfirferðar (1 st. reið); Kisá, sem kemur undan Kerlingarfjöllum og ber fram jökulvatn og hefir því blautan og kvikan leirbotn (2 st. reið); Miklalæk ($\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið; svæðið milli hans og Kisár er kallað Kjálkaver og eru þar hagar); Dalsá ($\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið; svæðið milli hennar og Miklalækjar heitir Loðnaver og eru þar góðir hagar). —

Frá Sóleyjarhöfða að Dalsá 5 st. reið.

Frá Dalsá er haldið áfram að Geldingsá ($\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið), þaðan að Gljúfurá ($\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið), Blautukvísl ($\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið, — á milli Gljúfurár og Blautukvíslar heitir Starkaðsver), efri Skúms- tungnaá ($\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið), neðri Skúms tungnaá (1 st. reið, — milli þeirra heitir Skúms tungur og er þar kofi og góðir hagar).

Frá Dalsá í Skúms tungur 7 st. reið.

Heðan er sveigt frá Þjórsá meir til útsuðurs yfir fell eitt, Sandafell, að Rauða (1 st. reið); síðan er farið fram hjá gili með fossi, hógum og fjárrétt (1 st. reið). Þá kemur Fossá ($\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið) og er þá komið inn í Þjórsárdal með mörgum eyðijörð- um og bæjarrústum, sem Bruun rannsakaði 1896. Þá er haldið að Sandá (1 st. reið). Vestan árinna sjást aftur brekkur, vaxnar skógi, og eftir $\frac{1}{2}$ stundar reið koma menn að endastöð leiðarinn- ar, bænum Skriðufelli.

Frá Skúms tungum að Skriðufelli 4 st. reið.

L. LEIÐIN AUSTAN ÞJÓRSÁR OFAN Í RANGÁRVALLASÝSLU.

Frá Sóleyjarhöfða að Tungnaá 2 daga ferð.

Leiðin liggur yfir sanda svipaða Sprengisandi, ef til vill nokkru öldóttari. Það er ríðið fram með Þjórsá að austan, en þó fyrst um sinn hérumbil $\frac{1}{4}$ mílu frá henni, til þess að forðast sandbleytu við bakkana í nokkrum smáám. Eftir $3\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið nálg- ast menn aftur Þjórsá og koma þá eftir $\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið áfram í góða haga, við Hvannagil. Litlu norðar eru aðrir hagar rétt við Þjórsá; er hægt að finna þá, því þar er fallegur foss í ánni milli hólma og eyja. Er sá foss ýmist kallaður Hvannagilsfoss eða Kjálkaversfoss, og er seinna nafnið dregið af Kjálkaveri, sem liggur þar beint á móti.

Frá Sóleyjarhöfða að Hvannagili 4 st. reið.

Frá Hvannagili er haldið áfram í suður og ríðið burt frá Þjórsá

austur fyrir Búðarháls. Er þá fyrst farið yfir Svartá og síðan riðið niður undir Köldukvísl, straumharða jökulkvísl, sem vart er fær svo sunnarlega (ef til vill við Illugaver, í landnorðri). Við Köldukvísl eru lélegir hagar, Klifshagavellir, og er þar bygður kofi.

Frá Hvannagili að Klifshagavöllum 2 st. reið.

Frá Klifshagavöllum er riðið fram með Köldukvísl í útsuður með Búðarháls á hægri hönd til ármótanna, þar sem Kaldakvísl fellur í Tungnaá, og þaðan fram með henni, unz hún fellur í Þjórsá, og eru þar hagar. Yfir Tungnaá er farið á ferju. Þar eru sem stendur tveir bátar, sem notaðir eru af smölum á vorin og haustin. En þeir eru vanalega báðir við syðri bakkann, svo ekki verður komist yfir að norðan. Annar þeirra ætti að vera við nyrðri bakkann.

Frá Tungna er haldið áfram til næsta bæjar fyrir sunnan, Galtarlæk.

M. ARNARFELLSLEIÐIN.

Geti menn, þegar komið er að sunnan, ekki komist yfir Þjórsá við Sóleyjarhöfða, eða þykist menn, þegar komið er að norðan, sjá, að það sé ómögulegt, ættu menn að leggja leið sína fram með röndinni á Hofsjökli, því þá geta menn farið yfir jökulkvísl-arnar eina og eina í senn, áður en vatnsmegn þeirra allra kemur saman í Þjórsá.

Þegar menn koma að norðan, sveigja menn, þegar komið er yfir Fjórðungakvísl, lengra vestur á bóginn yfir að aðaluppsprettu Þjórsár (vörður sýna, hvar leiðin liggur út úr), og er þá fyrst farið yfir nokkrar hæðir, sem lengi vel skyggja á Þjórsá. Er þá aðallega stefnt dálítið fyrir norðan Arnarfell ið mikla, sem nú ber mest á. Síðan er farið yfir Þjórsá og því næst allar hinar svo nefndu Þjórsárvíslar, hverja eftir aðra. Sumar þeirra geta verið talsvert straumharðar, og menn verða vel að gæta sín við sandbleytu í botni og við bakka. Vanalega mun þó varla við neina sérlega örðugleika að stríða. Eftir hérumbil 2 st. hæga reið yfir grýtta sanda, þar sem árnar stöðugt breyta farveg sínum, koma menn í útjaðarinn á stórum sand- og melafláka og urðaröldum, sem mynda breitt belti fram með jökulröndinni. Er þá riðið í útsuður fram með urðaröldunum og stefnt á Arnarfell ið mikla. Menn verða að riða fót fyrir fót, því þar er ákaflega grýtt. Arnarfell ið mikla er eiginlega tvö fell, og ganga armar úr jöklinum fram á milli þeirra og kringum þau. Frá þeim koma hinar svo nefndu Arnarfellskvíslar. Nú er farið yfir hina nyrztu af þeim og riðið fram hjá nyrðra fellinu, sem er umkringgt af tveimur jökulörmum, fram hjá hæsta tindinum á syðra fellinu, en við rætur

Þess er frábær jurtagróður, og er þá komið í ágæta haga sunnan undir fellinu í skjóli þess.

Frá Sprengisandsveginum (fyrir sunnan Fjórðungakvísl) að Arnarfelli 4 st. reið.

Frá Arnarfelli inu mikla er fyrst farið yfir Arnarfellskvísl og því næst fram með landsuðurhorni jökulsins, og er þá fylgt útjaðri urðarflákans, en þar vex víðir, hvannir og gras. Þá er fyrst farið yfir hinar svo nefndu Múlakvíslar, og frá hinni síðustu þeirra er skamt til Miklukvíslar, og rétt á eftir koma menn í áningarstaðinn Nauthaga við laugarnar undir fjallabelti í jökulröndinni.

Frá Arnarfelli inu mikla að Nauthaga 2½—3 st. reið.

Frá Nauthaga er fyrst riðið í útsuður yfir hina mörgu arma Blautukvíslar og stefnt sunnanvert við Kerlingarfjöll. Til þess gengur tæp ½ st. og er farið yfir þar sem breiðast er. Botninn er ekki neitt sérlega slæmur. Þegar komið er alveg yfir um, geta menn haldið í boga fram með Blautukvísl, í landsuður að Sóleyjarhöfða.

Frá Nauthaga að Sóleyjarhöfða 2 st. reið.

Nú liggur leiðin suður á við fram með Þjórsá, sem fyr er lýst. Þó má einnig riða beint frá Nauthaga suður að Dalsá yfir hið flata hálendi, og er sú leið auðrötuð í góðu veðri. Annars skal þess getið, að, þegar vel stendur á og enginn vöxtur er í ánum, má fara beina leið frá Arnarfelli inu mikla að Sóleyjarhöfða á 3—4 stundum. En það er naumast mikið unnið við að hætta á slíkt, og ættu menn heldur að riða hinn lengri og tryggari veg yfir Nauthaga.

Loks skal þess getið, að bæði frá Nauthaga og frá Sóleyjarhöfða má riða á fám klukkustundum til Kerlingarfjalla. Frá Sóleyjarhöfða að Áskarðsá, sem er lélegur áningarstaður norðan við miðbik Kerlingarfjalla, er varla meir en 5 st. reið. Er þá stefnt milli Kerlingarfjalla og Hofsjökuls. Frá Áskarðsá að Gránanesi á Kjalvegi er 3 st. reið.

N. ÚTÚRLEIÐIN TIL JÖKULDAIS

(= Nýjadals) í Tungnafellsjökli.

Hafi menn ekki notað hinn lélega áningarstað við Kíðagil, verður dagleiðin milli áningarstaðanna Innrimosa í Mjófadál og Eyvindarkofavers nokkuð löng, t. d. fyrir hesta undir þungum klyfjum. Það getur þá komið til greina að stytta dagleiðina með því, að gera þriggja stunda útúrdúr til Jökuldals (= Nýjadals) í útsuðurhorninu á Tungnafellsjökli, því þar eru hagar. Þegar komið er að norðan, sveigja menn þá út af leiðinni í landsuður, annaðhvort jafnskjótt og menn eru komnir fram hjá Fjórðungs-

vatni og stefna á suðurhornið á Tungnafellsjökli, eða, þegar þoka er, draga það, unz komið er að Fjórðungakvísl og halda þá fram með henni. Þegar komið er að sunnan, sveigja menn út af leiðinni nokkru fyrir sunnan Fjórðungakvísl.

Frá Mjófadal og í Jökuldal $9\frac{1}{2}$ —10 st. reið, frá Jökuldal að Eyvindarkofaveri 5 st. reið, og loks má fara frá Jökuldal beint til Arnarfells ins mikla á 6—7 stundum.

Alt hið framantalda stundatal er miðað við nokkurnveginn meðalreið. En geti menn farið með meiri hraða, hafi góða hesta og ekki of marga klyfjahesta, má fara þetta á töluvert skemmri tíma. Til dæmis skal tilfært, hve lengi 6 alþingismenn, sem siðastliðið sumar fóru úr Suðurþingeyjarsýslu til Reykjavíkur og riðu mjög hart, voru á leiðinni:

Frá Mýri að Mosum $2\frac{1}{2}$ klukkustund.

Frá Mosum að Kiðagili $1\frac{1}{2}$ kl. st.

Frá Kiðagili að Arnarfelli inu mikla $9\frac{1}{4}$ kl. st.

Frá Arnarfelli inu mikla að Nauthaga 2 kl. st.

Frá Nauthaga að Dalsá $5\frac{1}{4}$ kl. st.

Frá Dalsá í Skúmstungur 4 kl. st.

Úr Skúmstungum að Skriðufelli 2 kl. st.

Hér er viðstaða á endastöðvunum ekki talin með.

Þeir fóru frá Mýri 18. júlí kl. $1\frac{1}{2}$ e. h. og komu að Skriðufelli 20. júlí kl. 8 um kveldið. Þeir höfðu þannig riðið millum bygða á $54\frac{1}{2}$ kl. st. og sýnir það, að þeir hafa haft ágætishesta og sjálfir verið þolnir reiðmenn. Enn hraðari ferð hafði þó Jón Oddsson eitt sinn, er hann kom að sunnan. Hann fór þá þessa leið á 36 kl. st., en hann áði þá bæði sjaldan og stutt. Fyrst áði hann við Kísá 5 st. að degi til; í annað sinn við Eyvindarkofaver og ætlaði að hafa þar náttstað. En er hestar hans þrír fældust við ólætin í álftunum og ætluðu að strjúka burt, þá helt hann áfram eftir 3 st. bið. Síðan áði hann svolítið við Kiðagil. Þessa ferð fór hann 7.—8. sept. 1897 heimleiðis, er hann hafði fylgt Ferfatteren heraf yfir Sprengisand.

O. LEIÐIN FRÁ SPRENGISANDI OFAN Í EYJAFJÖRÐ.

Vilji menn fara beina leið af Sprengisandi ofan í Eyjafjörð, þá er best að fara út af veginum hérumbil $1\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið fyrir sunnan Fjórðungsvatn; Liggur þá leiðin í boga fyrst í útnorður að Laugafelli, síðan að Eystripollum og þaðan í norður með ofurlitlum halla til landnorðurs að Ullarvötnum og þaðan í austur niður í fjörðinn.

Menn stefna beint á Laugafell, sem sést eins og einstakur hringmyndaður kollur góðan kipp fyrir norðan Hofsjökul. Menn fara yfir Bergvatnkvísl (= Bergkvísl) og fara svo upp á móti





með hana á hægri hönd. Þegar hana þrýtur er 10 mínútna reið yfir vörpin, unz menn koma að upptökum Laugakvísar, sem er ein af uppsprettum Jökulsár hinnar eystri. Er þá riðið fram með hægri bakka hennar, með Laugafell á vinstri hönd og Laugaöldu á hægri. Við rætturnar á Laugaöldu vestanverðri koma menn að laugum við eina af uppsprettum Laugakvísar, sem kemur frá norðurrótunum á Laugaöldu. Þar eru allviðunanlegir hagar.

Frá Sprengisandsveginum að Laugafelli $3\frac{1}{2}$ —4 st. reið.

Frá Jökuldal að Laugafelli $6\frac{1}{2}$ —7 st. reið.

Frá Arnarfelli inn mikla yfir Þjórarkvísar í landnorður og téða leið að Laugafelli 9—10 st. reið.

Frá Laugafelli er riðið yfir grýtt svæði í útnorður og farið yfir litla á á leiðinni að Eystripollum — skamt frá Jökulsá hinni eystri — $1\frac{1}{2}$ st. reið. Við Eystripolla eru góðir hagar. Menn finna þá, ef ekki er farið of norðarlega. Annars er ekkert til að miða stefnuna við á þessari leið. Í dimmviðri eða þöku ættu menn helzt að halda sér við hina eystri uppsprettu Laugakvísar, síðan hana sjálfa að Jökulsá og svo þaðan áfram að Eystripollum. Er þá komið á hinn svo nefnda Vatnahjallaveg, sem liggur af Kjalvegi beint að fjallinu Vatnahjalla inn af Eyjafirði. Er það fremur ógreiður og grýttur vegur, einkum síðasti kaflinn.

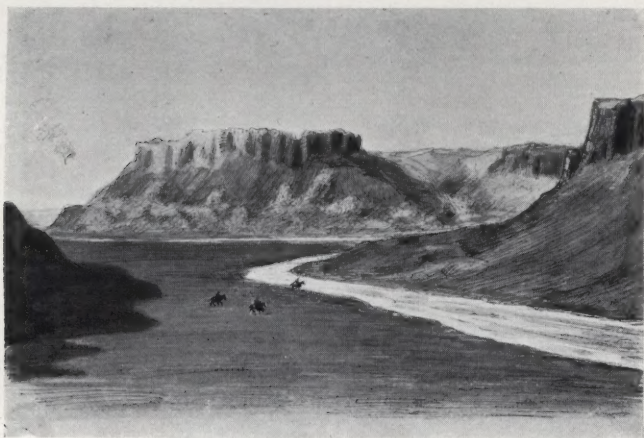
Frá Eystripollum er haldið í norður og ögn til landnorðurs og er þá farið yfir eintómar urðir upp á mótí að Ullarvötnum, sem eru 3 smávötn í auðn fyrir vestan Vatnahjalla, einkennilegt fjall, sem vegurinn dregur nafn sitt af. Menn koma að suðurenda vatnanna, fara fram með þeim að austan og stefna í norður með Hjallahnúk, einstökum hnúk, á hægri hönd, unz menn koma á brúnina fyrir ofan Eyjafjörð. Á síðasta kaflanum eru gamlar vörður, sem þó ekki ætíð eru á sem hentugustum stað. Leiðin niður í fjörðinn er örðug og svo er riðið í norður að bænum Tjörnum, sem liggur þar inst, austan árinna. En þar fyrir vestan og nokkru sunnar liggur dálítið kot.

Frá Eystripollum að Ullarvötnum	2	st. reið
Frá Ullarvötnum á fjarðarbrúnina	$1\frac{1}{2}$	—
Af fjarðarbrúninni niður í botn hans	$\frac{1}{2}$	—
Þaðan að Tjörnum	$\frac{1}{2}$	—
Frá Eystripollum að Tjörnum	$4\frac{1}{2}$	—
Frá Tjörnum til Akureyrar	8—10	—

Þess skal enn fremur getið, að úr Eyjafirði má riða til Laugafells gegnum Sölvadal og Þormóðsdal upp á hálendið. En í sjálfum dölunum er þó vegurinn ógreiðfær; aftur kvað hann ekki

vera neitt afleitur, þegar komið er upp á hálendið, og þar eru að sögn fáeinar vörður. Einkum er brattinn ekki eins mikill og örðugur eins og upp frá Tjörnum.

Sprengisandsvegurinn og þær leiðir, er að honum liggja, eru engan veginn eins óttalegar og menn hafa haldið. Og hvergi þurfa menn að ríða meira en 8—10 stundir milli áningarstaða.*)



Thjórsárdalur.



*) J—O er með leyfi útg. tekið úr »Eimreiðinni«, og er rjettritun því lítið öðruvísi en ella.

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